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CU

AMIGA MAGAZINE

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We Look at the future of Amiga in the hands of VIScorp ...

REVIEWED

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- Audiolab 16
- Photogenics 2.0

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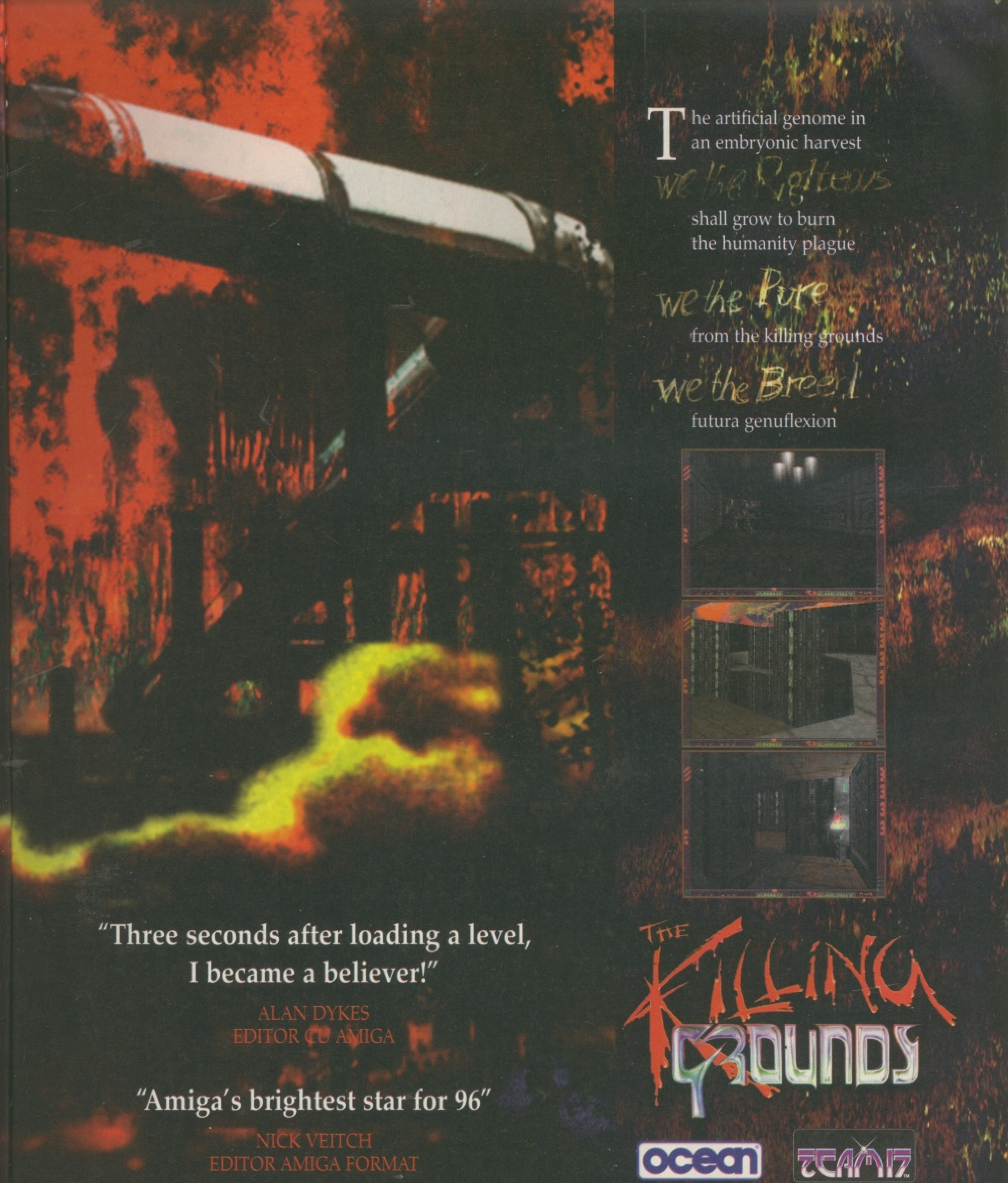
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Going east and south our roving microphone interviews people in the know from France, Italy, Spain, Hungary and elsewhere. Is the Amiga strong in these territories? Does a new Amiga stand any chance of selling there? We find out.



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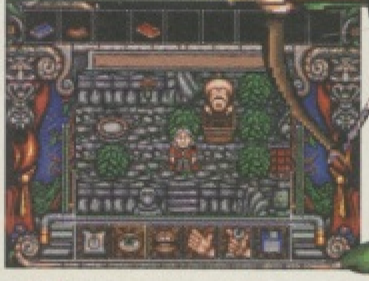
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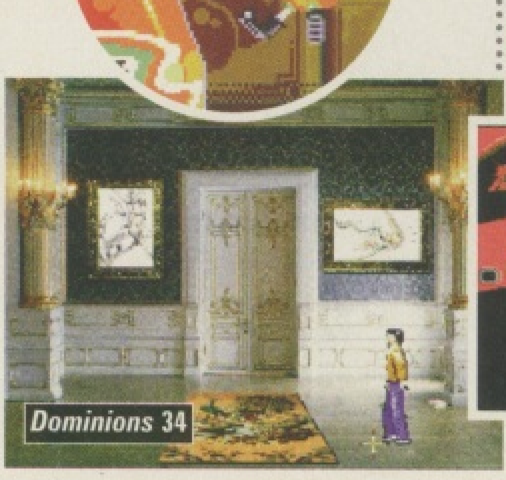
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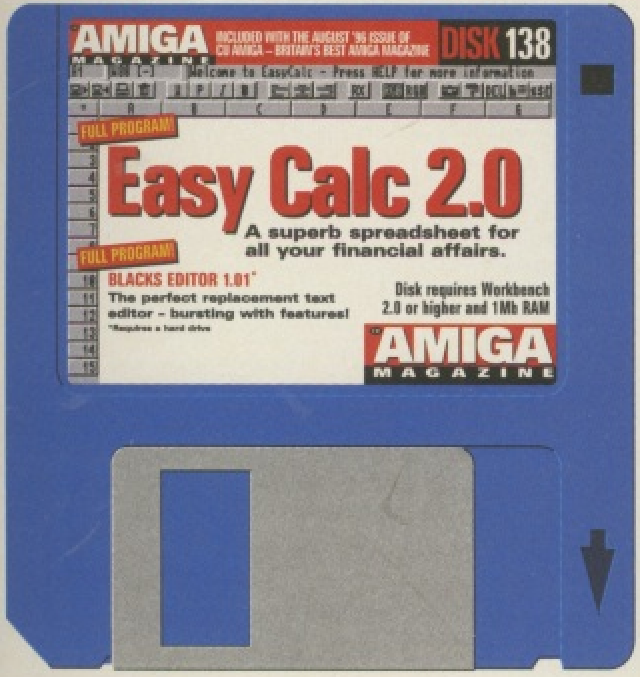


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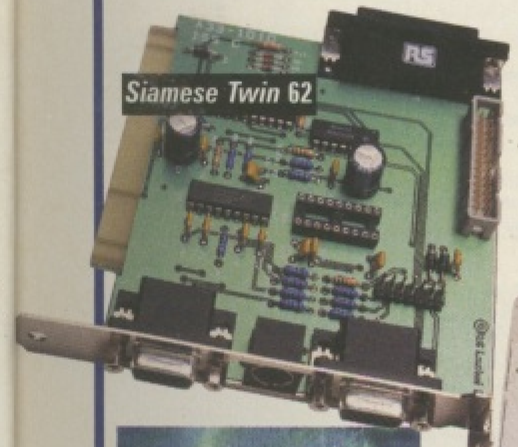




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Cover Story

The future of Amiga is now in the hands of American company VIScorp, as of 21 June (see news). What does the future hold then? We check out the key players.



PLUS!!! You can tell VIScorp what YOU want by FREEPOST. Details on page 25.

News ... PIOS — 16

This month's news features the full transcript of VIScorp's latest statement on the legal aspects of Amiga Technologies ownership and an interview with John Smith of PIOS on that company's plans for a new machine by September. Plus: news on Final Writer 5, Zip and Aminet.

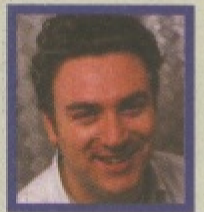
VISCORP



Workshop

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Editorial



And finally on June 21 VIScorp's takeover of Amiga Technologies was confirmed by Petro Tyschtshenko. This ended nearly two months of speculation since Escom and the Chicago based Internet development company first announced that a deal was in the offing back at the beginning of April, Just before World Of Amiga. This speculation centred around VIScorp's intentions for the Amiga as a computer and their commitment to develop the hardware and system enhancements needed to bring it in touch the next generation. But even before the announcement was made official, VIScorp had released a statement stating that they intended to do just that (see news), they also made legal noises about their copyrights and just how seriously they intended to look after them. If during the course of reading the magazine, and my Point Of View in particular, you come across something about VIScorp NOT making an announcement it's purely because of the time constraints of writing this magazine. Some pages go to press sooner than others, and this announcement arrived very late in the day.

I also had a very interesting chat with John Smith, now of PIOS (again, see news). Their developments, should they succeed, are promising.

Alan Dykes, Editor

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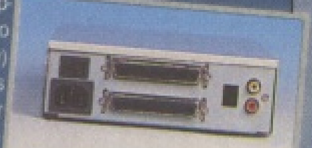
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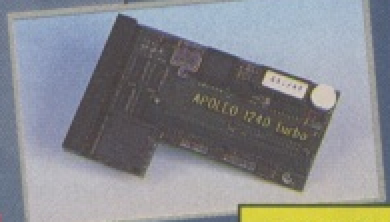


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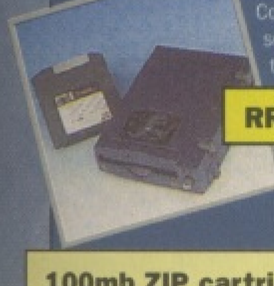
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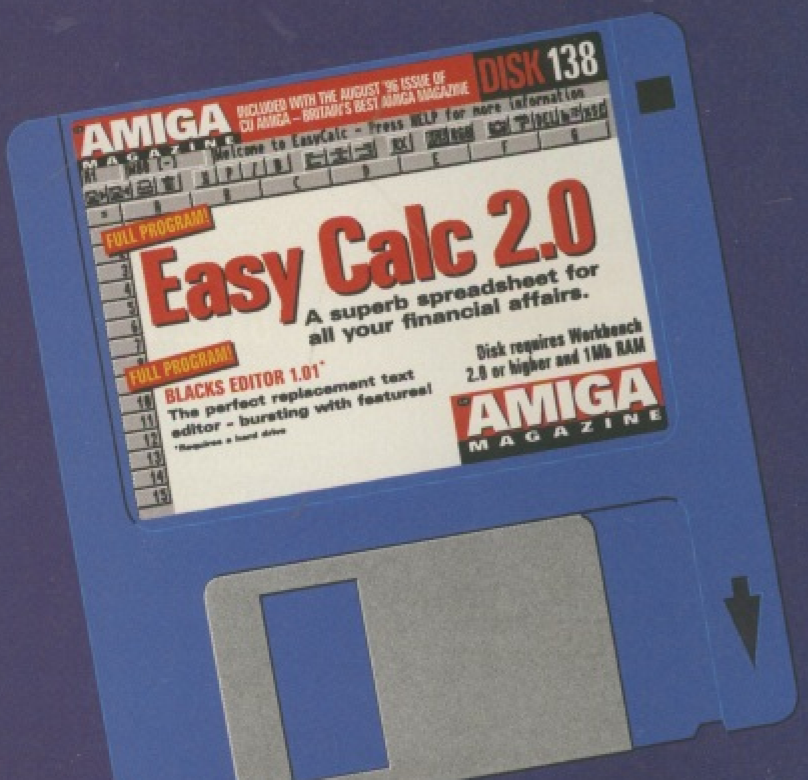
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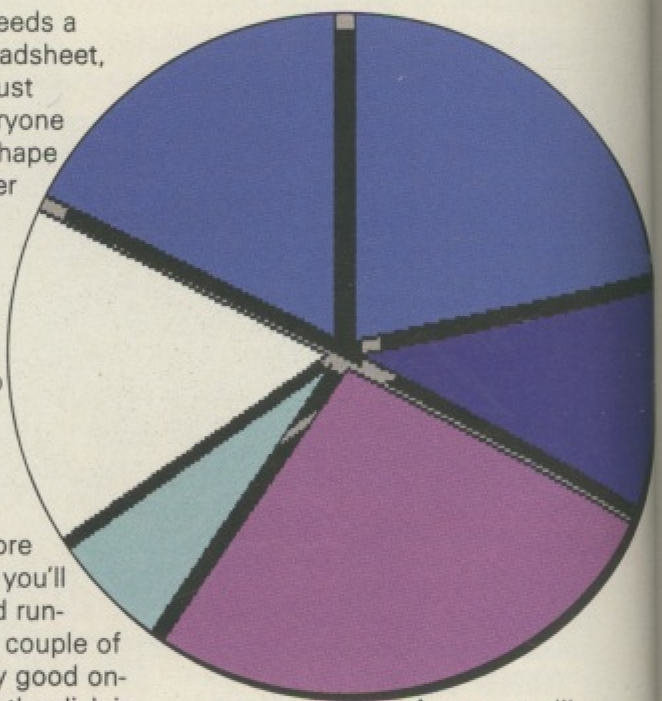
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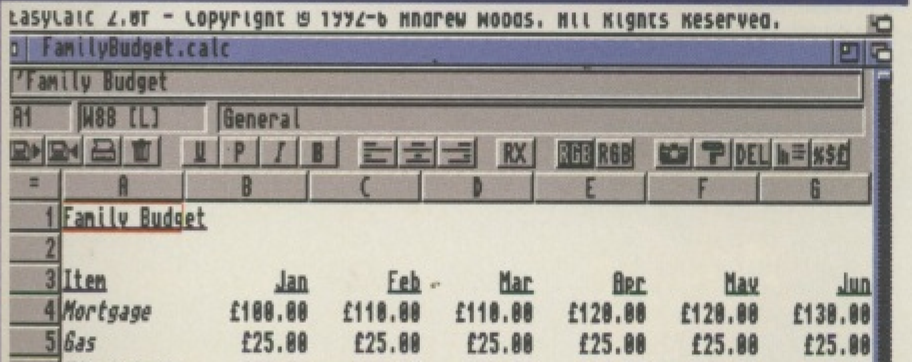
Easy Calc 2.0

This month's serious cover disk is headlined by the excellent Easy Calc 2.0, backed up by the equally impressive Blacks Editor 1.01.



Everyone needs a good spreadsheet, and now just about everyone has got one, in the shape of Easy Calc 2.0. After you've expanded it and loaded the program from the cover disk (see loading instructions on page 14) it's ready to go. Easy Calc works pretty much in the manner of most spreadsheets, so if you've used one before the chances are that you'll be able to get up and running with this after a couple of minutes. There's very good on-line help included on the disk in AmigaGuide form and this should be consulted for specific reference to the various features of the program.





▲ Plan your expenditure for the year ahead so you can spur yourself on to make some savings.

Introduction

This simple tutorial should have beginners getting to grips with their first worksheet. First of all, some brief background information on spreadsheets would be useful. Think of a spreadsheet as a piece of blank paper – the page from an accounting ledger for example. On this 'paper' you can write numbers and titles for sections of the accounts. On paper you have to add up columns manually, with a spreadsheet you can write a formula: the word SUM for example, makes the spreadsheet add up a range of numbers (called cells). The power of spreadsheets lies in the fact that once a formula has been written, even if you change the column of numbers, the formula will automatically add them up again.

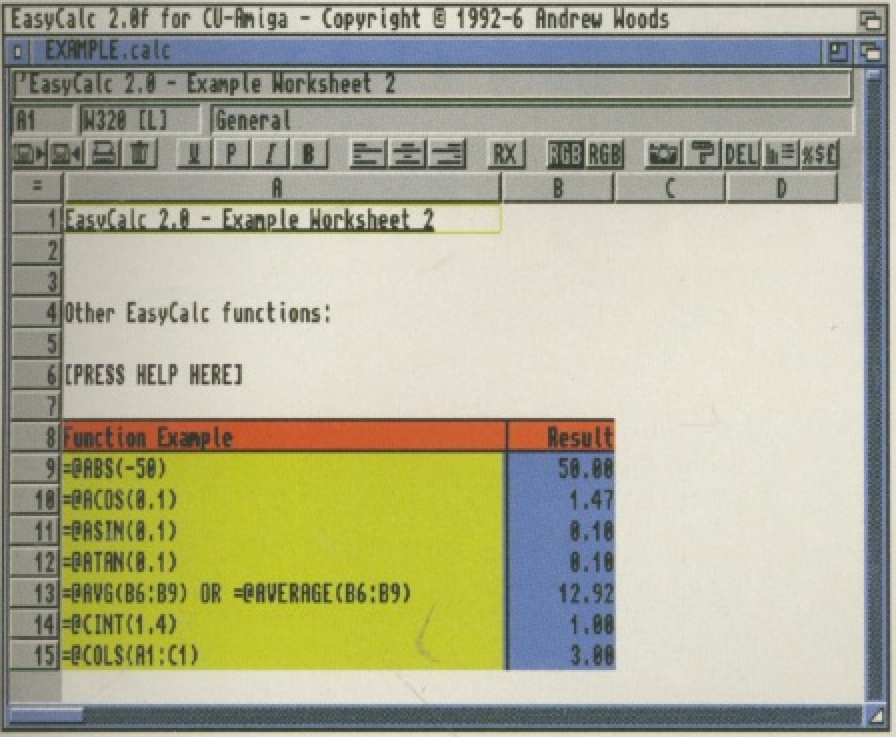
A program like EasyCalc has many different formulae, so it is capable of much more than just adding columns. Let's create a worksheet. Firstly, make sure you have EasyCalc 2.0 up and running and you are looking at a blank worksheet. If not then quit the program and then reload it. Now follow the next few steps exactly. Don't worry, it will all be explained!

1. Move the cursor down to cell B2 (that's down one, and across one from the top left hand cell. Now type 56 and press Return. The number 56 should appear in that cell.

2. Now move down one cell (to B3) and enter 23 (followed by Return of course). Now enter 78 in cell B4, then 67 in cell B5.

3. You should now have four cells (B2:B5) containing the numbers 56, 23,78, 67 respectively. If not start again.

4. Now let's get Easy Calc 2.0 to add up these numbers for us. Move to cell B7 and type in



▲ EasyCalc has lots of very handy functions.

the following text exactly:

=@sum(b2:b5)

then press Return. Quick as a flash, EasyCalc puts 224 in the cell. If you don't trust the program, then check it yourself.

Now let's break down exactly what EasyCalc did. It saw the '=' sign and attempted to evaluate the rest of the line. Then it came across the '@' sign which meant a function was next. The SUM function was recognised, and EasyCalc knew that it must add up all the cells in the range that followed. Upon finding no other functions, EasyCalc 2.0 displayed the result in the cell.Lets have a closer look at each part of that function.

= This tells EasyCalc that you want the rest of this line to be evaluated (as opposed to just putting the text into cell)

@ This tells EasyCalc to expect a function, which in this case is SUM, but EasyCalc has another 61 functions available.

SUM This is the function which adds up any range of cells you give it (such as b2:b5)

(b2:b5) This is the range for the SUM to work on.

So to summarise, all formulae start with an '=' sign and all functions are prefixed with an '@' symbol.

Now go to cell B9 and enter the following exactly (it should all be on one line with no carriage returns): **=@IF(b7 < 300, "I'm Skint!", "Loads of money")**

When you press Return, the answer "I'm Skint" should appear in the cell. IF is another EasyCalc function, but it is very special because it can make decisions. In this case, IF is used to decide if cell B7 contains a value less than 300. If it does then it returns "I'm Skint", otherwise"Loads of money" should appear.

To test this second condition, try changing cell B2 to 350. Instantly, B9 should now read, "Loads of money".

Try the following:

1. In cell B7, change the SUM (nothing else) to MIN so it would now read =@min(b2:b5) then try

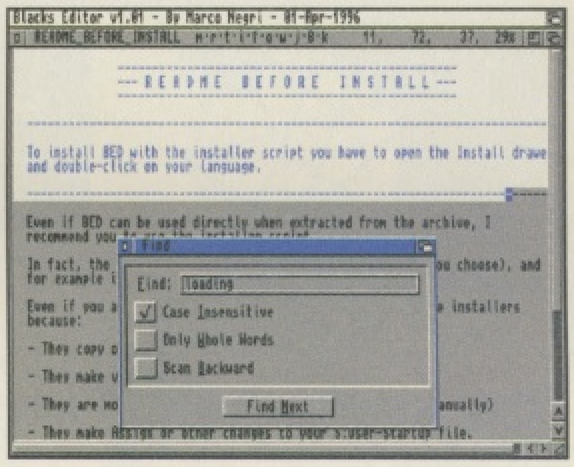
=@max(b2:b5)

=@avg(b2:b5)

2. Try changing the 350 in B9 to other values just to prove to yourself that it is not cheating. You can find the complete tutorial file 'TUTORIAL.calc' in the examples drawer.

It's also worth loading some of the ARexx macros (click the RX button on the control panel) as they demonstrate some interesting features of the program, such as its ability to draw a variety of different graphs and charts from your spreadsheets. There are also some example spreadsheets that demonstrate some of many and varied uses for the program. Load them in and take a look.

Blacks Editor 1.01



Just as everyone needs a good spreadsheet, everyone definitely needs a good text editor! This is one of the areas in which the Amiga's Workbench software is slack. The 'Ed' program that comes with Workbench is basic and good for little else than the simplest jobs such as startup-sequence tweaking. So this must be your lucky day, because Blacks Editor is an leap forward from Ed, and probably any other text editors you may have seen in the past.

Features

Blacks Editor (or Bed) has a wide range of features available from its menus, including text formatting, ARexx macro recording, bookmarks, search and replace, case alteration, text encryption and lots more.

OK, the first thing to do is load in text file and try out some of the menus options. Select Open File from the File menu and then pick any text file from your hard drive, such as the ReadMe document in the BED drawer. This will appear in the window and can be scrolled through using the normal window scroll bars. Clicking the left mouse button moves the cursor to the specified position, while areas of text can be selected by dragging the mouse with the left button held down. You'll notice some numbers in the top bar of the window. The first represents the current line number, the second denotes the current column, the third is the total number of lines in the document and the fourth tells you how far into the document you are in the form of a percentage.

Most of the menu options are easy to understand. Experiment with the Edit, Format and Extras menus by selecting an area of text and then making a menu selection. You'll see the text change according to your selection. From the Tools menu you can open a Shell window or launch some of your Workbench utilities, such as the calculator, or even execute an AmigaDos script by clicking on it from the file requester.

Open all hours

You can also have more than one document open at once. By selecting Open New Doc from the File menu you can load an additional text file which will be placed in its own window. Your original file will still be in the memory but will be hidden by the new window. To view both at once, either re-size the new window by hand or select one of the automatic window formatting options from the Window menu (such as Tile, Stack or Cascade).

Other useful features include the bookmarks. You can set a bookmark by moving the cursor to the required position then choosing Set Bookmark followed by a number from the sub-menu. Moving back to that point is then just a matter of selecting that number with the Go to Bookmark option. You'll also find the Find feature can save a lot of time. Select it from the Find menu and then enter the string of text you're looking for. If you want to continue the search further, press Right Amiga N or click the Find Next box. Blacks Editor is well documented in the AmigaGuide file which is included in the archive.

So fast even Mat missed it!

(this is the one that got away from Mat Bettinson's modem round-up)



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* Note that, for now, we use the slip protocol and AmiTCP because this is far less expensive than the current alternatives. However, all Net&Web owners will be able to upgrade to the brilliant, new TermiteTCP (which supports ppp) at a reduced price.

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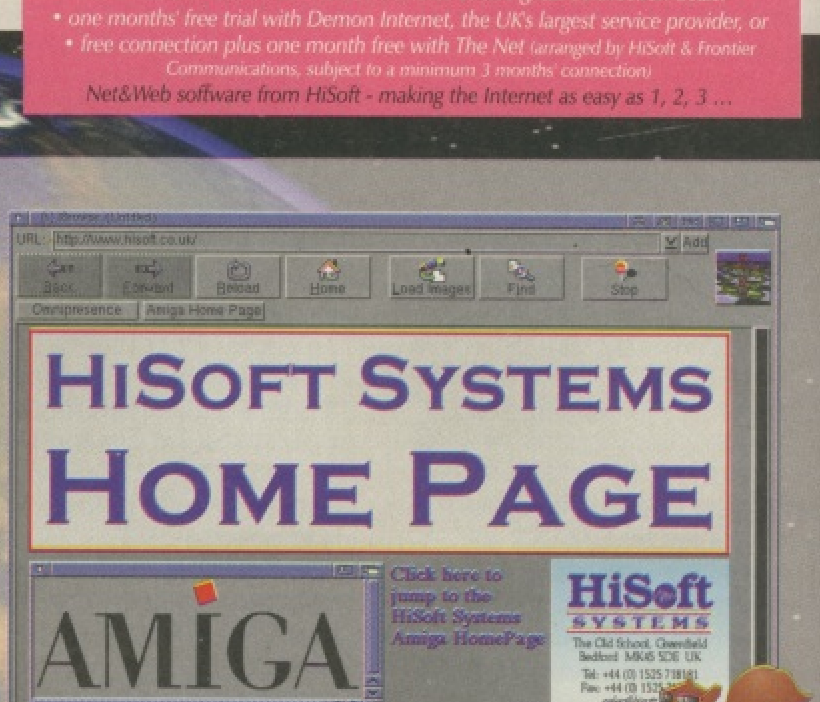
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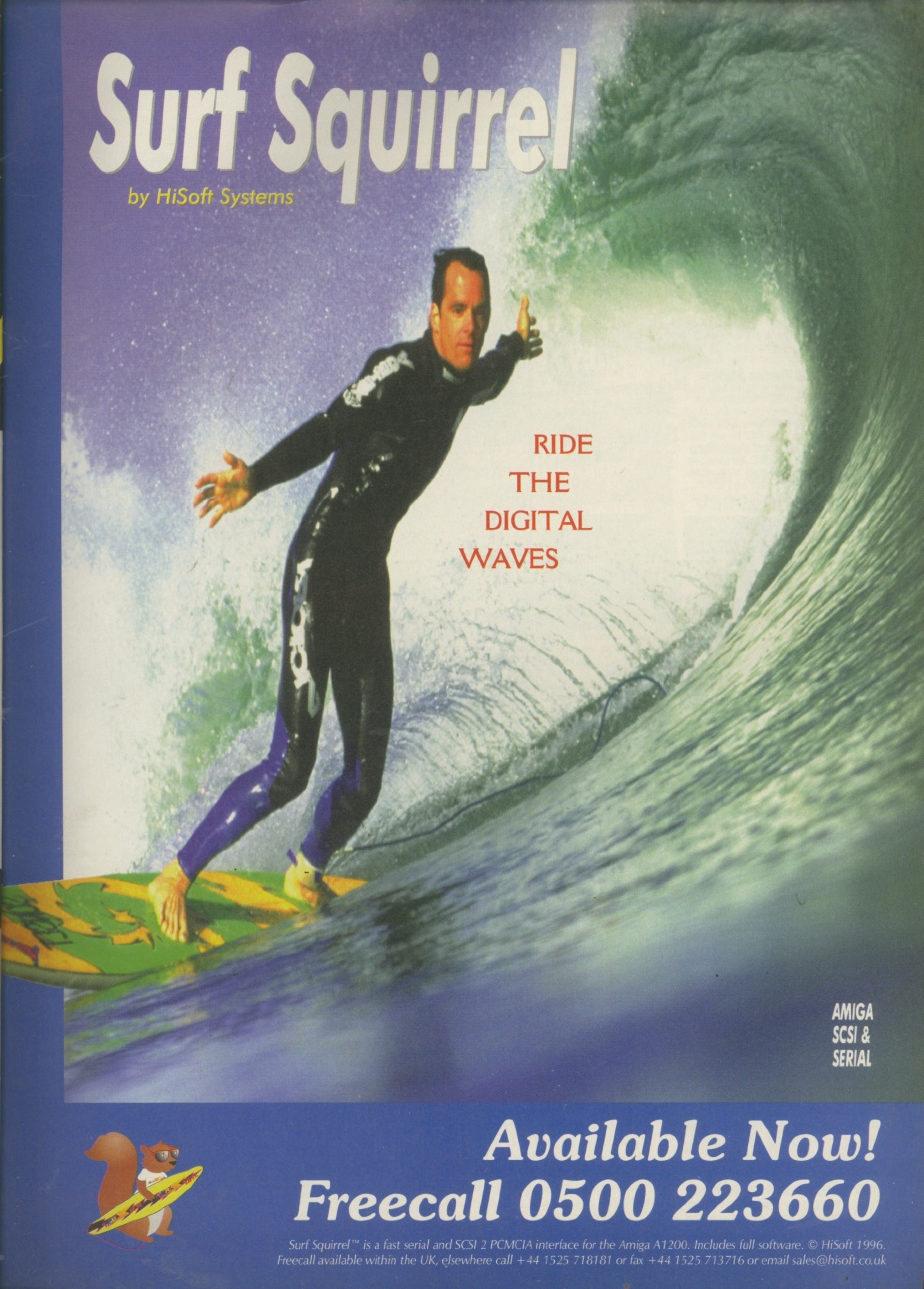
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33MHz FPU

An FPU dramatically increases the speed of mathematical calculations (by up to 127 times!) and we would recommend it for users of graphical applications such as Image FX, Lightwave, Vista Pro, Imagine etc. Our FPU pack comes with the timing crystal and is compatible with most A1200 RAM/Processor accelerators such as our Apollo/Magnum design, Hawk, Blizzard and Viper. If bought independent of our board the price is

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7.12 MIPS OF SPEED

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A1200 40MHz '030 Processor Accelerator

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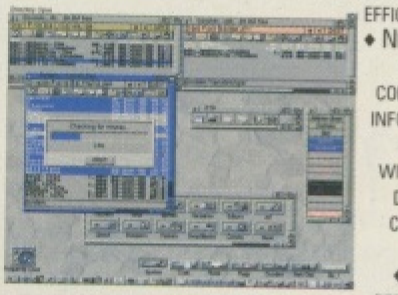
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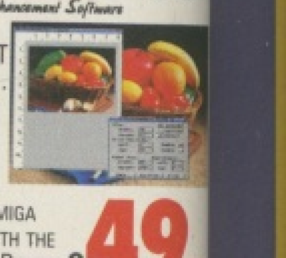


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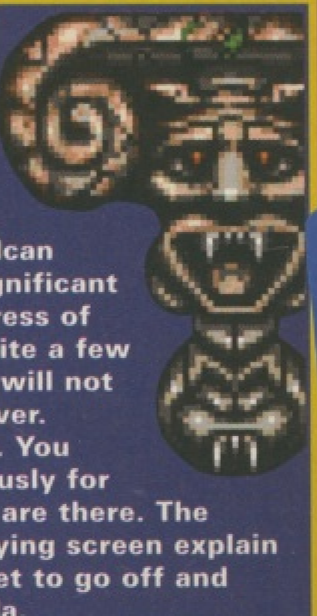
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DISK 139

Valhalla & the fortress of Eve

A demo by Vulcan Software

Requires 1Mb RAM



Icon see clearly

(the old ones are the best)

This exclusive demo, courtesy of Vulcan Software, on cover disk 139 is a significant chunk of the third level of the Fortress of Eve. You should be able to solve quite a few puzzles before the demo ends. You will not be able to complete the level however.
All the icons old and new are there. You won't be able to save or load obviously for this demo but all the other options are there. The three two rows below the main playing screen explain what each icon does. Now you're set to go off and have a bash at the new look Valhalla.





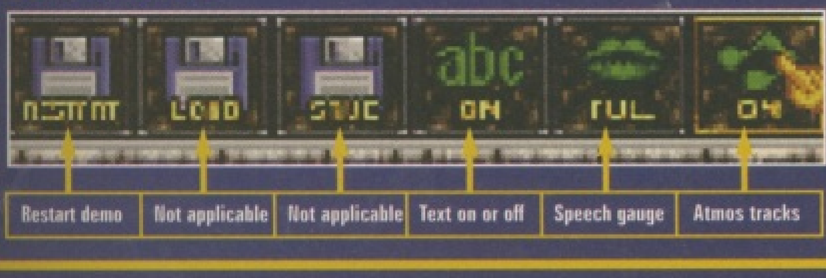
Main playing screen icons



Rucksack icons



Options screen





It's good to be King, especially when you're the star of the latest Valhalla series. Cover disk 138 is a taste of what to look forward to.

Vulcan Software are back with yet another of the Valhalla series. However, this time the game has a new look and revamped playing perspective making it even more enjoyable than the earlier incarnations. Turn to page 38 for the full review to check it out.

For the new installment of the Valhalla series, the King is looking for a wife and he's got four worlds to complete before he can find a fair damsel to marry because they've all been locked by the evil Queen Eve. This demo contains a significant chunk of the third level which sees you bumping into, amongst others, various ancestors of the evil Queen Eve.

Easi-peasi

This demo will run on all 1Mb Amigas and and loading it couldn't be simpler. Simply insert the disk into your floppy drive and turn your Amiga on. The game will boot up straight away. A introduction screen will appear with some details about the game on it. Right click the mouse button to get rid of this screen and you should be able to go straight into the game. You can also install to hard disk. Just create a drawer on your hard drive and copy the contents of the disk to it. Click on the Valhalla icon which should appear in the drawer to boot the game.

The first screen will appear with no icons along the bottom, click on the playing area and the icons will appear. Now you're ready to play. To walk around the level, move the pointer on the screen, holding the left mouse button down, to the direction that you want to go and our little king will go off that way.

Get lucky

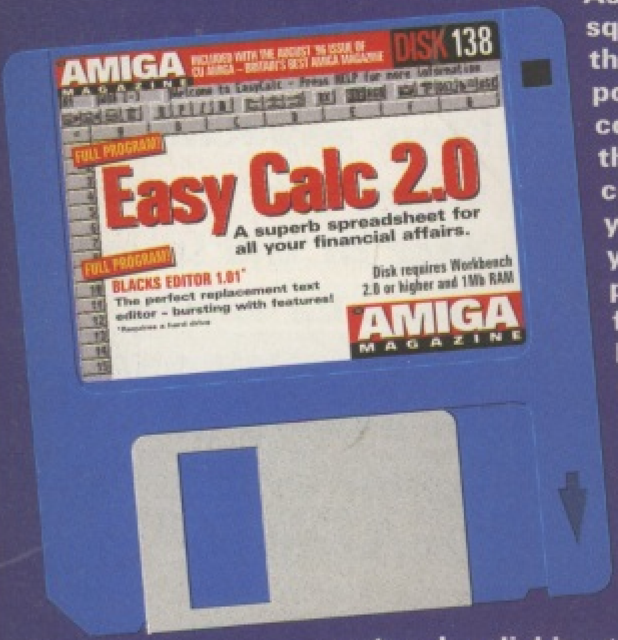
To pick up, put down, operate or insert an object just stand facing the desired object and click the appropriate icon. (See the box out on the left for details of what each icon does). For this demo you will not be able to save or load but all the other options are there including the background music option and ability to limit the amount that the little Kings says.

The trick to this level is to get as much information as you can from the various books lying around, to talk to whoever you can and to generally explore as much as you can. The demo will cut out after you have solved the first five or six puzzles. Good luck! ■

cover disks

How to Load...

Cover disk 138



As usual in order to squeeze as much onto the cover disks as possible we've compressed both of the main programs on cover disk 138. Before you can run them you'll need to decompress them using the following steps. Floppy users can boot straight from cover disk 138 by inserting the disk and resetting. If you prefer to boot from Workbench or a hard drive you can do so, then start the decompression menu system by clicking the CUMenu icon.

Now you've got the menu up you can select which of the two programs you want to decompress. You'll need a spare floppy disk to hand for each one. Click on either of the big disk icons to expand the relevant programs. You'll be prompted to change disks when the time is right. Make sure your original cover disk 138 is write protected to avoid accidentally over-writing it during this processes. Click the close gadget in the top left corner of the screen to return to your Workbench.

Easy Calc 2.0

You'll now have a self-booting Easy Calc disk. If you are running on a floppy-only system you can reset the machine and boot from this disk. Hard drive owners will find it more practical to simply run the Easy Calc program from the Workbench. Either way you can access the AmigaGuide help files straight from the disk. The AmigaGuide reader is included on the disk for ease of use for floppy systems. Hard drive users will probably want to make use of the installation program that's included. Just double click the icon and follow the instructions, telling the installer where you want the program to be copied to on your hard drive.

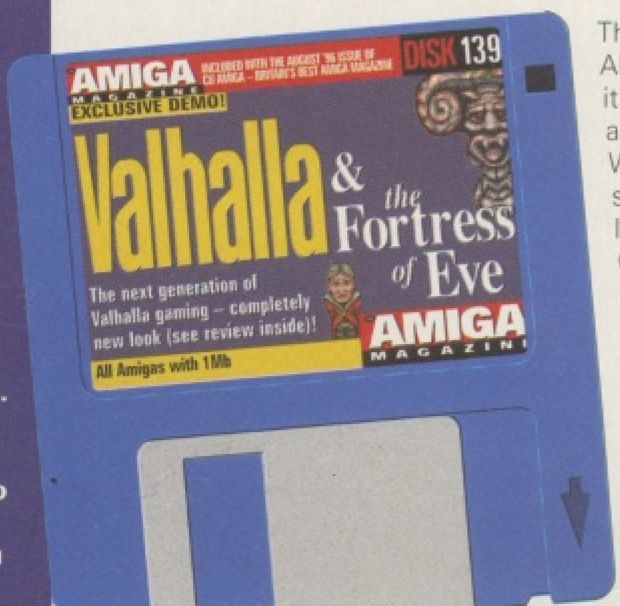


Blacks Editor 1.01

You'll need to boot from your hard drive before you can use your Blacks Editor disk. Do so, then open the disk and double click the BED program icon that can be found in the BED drawer. That's all there is to it. **Now turn to page 8 for usage instructions.**

Cover disk 139

Valhalla & the Fortress of Eve



This is a self booting disk. All you have to do is chuck it into the internal drive and reboot your Amiga. Within seconds a loading screen will appear, followed by an Intro screen. Clicking on the left mouse button will bring you into the game. Unlike all previous versions of Valhalla, The Fortress Of Eve is mouse controlled, so make sure you have it plugged in. Likewise it's advisable to be wired for sound so you can hear the speech.

IF YOUR DISK WON'T LOAD

We go to great trouble to ensure that the CU Amiga Magazine cover disks will work on common Amiga models. However, if you do experience problems follow this simple guide.

We also vigorously virus check our cover disks on a branded virus checker. If some escape our attention we cannot assume responsibility for it.

1: Remove all unnecessary upgrades and peripherals, such as printers and modems. Some trapdoor expansions can also cause problems.

2: Follow the instructions on this and previous pages exactly.

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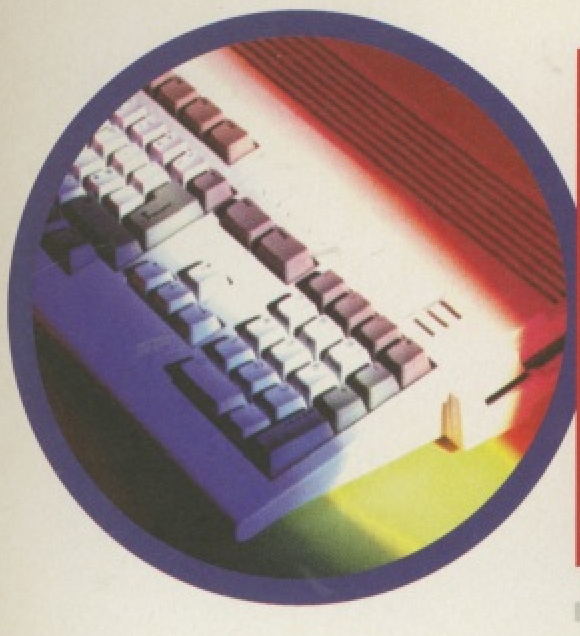
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News

VIScorp threatens legal action

Amiga Tech purchase finally confirmed for US$40m



VIScorp started to lay down the law about legal action against any Amiga copyright infringement days before they even confirmed that a deal had been finalised. In a strongly worded statement released on 19 June they announced that: "We are purchasing Amiga Technologies at great expense ... companies will be placing themselves at legal risk because their systems will undoubtedly infringe on Amiga intellectual property rights including copyrights, patents and trade secrets" and "VIScorp intends to aggressively defend its position as the owner of the Amiga and its related technologies." Finally on 21 June, Petro Tyschtshenko, MD of Amiga Technologies officially confirmed the purchase to CU Amiga Magazine.

The 50 days due diligence period, originally set up between Escom and VIScorp ran out at the end of May, but it took three weeks for the announcement to be made official.

The statement from VIScorp may stem from legal worries following reports of the Toulouse gathering where VIScorp were quoted as saying they were not interested in developing Amiga themselves but were rather more interested in licencing. Now they seem to have changed their minds and want to actively develop the Amiga as a "desktop computer". The following is a full transcript of the statement, released from their Chicago offices:

"In the months ahead VIScorp will be making substantial improvements to the Amiga system architecture including both the hardware design and the operating system software. These advanced new systems will be developed not only for our upcoming set-top boxes but also for future Amiga desktop computers. VIScorp is investing considerable resources into engineering these improvements. One of the primary objectives of VIScorp's business plan is to develop and manufacture and market Amiga desktop computers.

New group

"Many of the above improvements require an in-depth knowledge of specialist markets and technologies and because of this VIScorp made the decision in May 1996 to form an architectural design group consisting of a small number of highly qualified Amiga experts. While this group is still in its early formation stage we intend to oversee and resolve the numerous suggestions and enhancements that must be addressed for the long term success of the Amiga.

Technological licences

"As stated VIScorp will research and develop valuable enhancements to the architecture and technology of Amiga resulting in a wide range of next generation, price competitive computer products. There are, however, situations where it makes sense for VIScorp to licence Amiga related technology to qualified companies whose business objectives are consistent with VIScorp's long range plan.

"Such agreements may include Binary, ROM and documentation licencing for the distribution of Amiga OS upgrades, hardware and software system licences for speciality markets and possibly source code co-development licences to expand the Amiga and its feature set into the next decade.

Property rights infringement

"It has come to our attention that several companies plan to build their own compatible or extended versions of the Amiga without obtaining the proper licencing from VIScorp.

"These companies will be placing themselves at legal risk because their systems will undoubtedly infringe on Amiga intellectual property rights including copyrights, patents and trade secrets. In addition we have recently become aware that versions of the Amiga systems are being reproduced and distributed without proper licencing. This is a violation of international copyright law and VIScorp will prosecute the offenders to the full extent of the law.

"Realise that VIScorp is purchasing the AMiga technology at great expense for ownership of precisely the above rights and considers them a fundamental asset of the company. As such VIScorp intends to aggressively defend its position as the owner of the Amiga and its related technologies.

"Companies that choose to violate the law are well advised to consider the easier and less costly path of obtaining a licence."

Join our campaign to save the Amiga by writing to VIScorp using the FREEPOST letter on page 25 ...

PIOS machines by September



In an exclusive interview with CU Amiga Magazine John Smith furthered the cause of PIOS by promising new machines by September.

The new computer, which will be a hybrid – a cross platform based on a Motorola chip and using two licenced operating systems – will be an interim machine though, PIOS are working on a next generation computer too which they hope to have ready by this time next year.

Moving on

We asked Mr Smith what his feelings were about leaving Amiga Technologies.

"Obviously my feelings are tinged with some sadness, but I'm very excited to move to a new company, one which I am a founder member of.

"I've just gone through a period of eight years where I've been associated with Amiga products. Within those eight years not only did I gain a lot of pleasure from Amiga I realised that the Amiga as a product would stand the test of time.

"However, I was general sales manager at Amiga Technologies and at the end of the day one has to have a product that one 100% believes in and 100% believes that there is a future for.

"I was at Commodore in the dizzy days of high Amiga sales. We weren't given these sales though, in fact I remember when Atari outsold us, but we proved to people that Amiga was a better technology and machine and we won in the end. After eight years, the demise of Commodore, the fact that the UK company did not manage its management buyout and its subsequent acquisition by Escom who formed Amiga Technologies, I realised that the Amiga was not now realising its potential and, as the saying goes, I voted with my feet."

Does John Smith harbour any grudges against Amiga Technologies then?

"I'm not a person to bear grudges at all, but if by that remark you are saying 'do I acknowledge that things could have been done better?' then yes, of course they could. It is unfortunate that we did not obtain the tools that we believed were necessary to bring the Amiga back to the forefront."

Why PIOS?

What does he believe he and other founders of PIOS are bringing to this new company that will make it succeed in the long term?

"First of all it's the first time ever that I've been involved at the very beginning of a project like this. It's difficult to explain much at the moment, but over the next three months I will hope to talk to you more clearly about the plans of PIOS.

"Initially I will be coming to market with a hybrid machine that will have two operating systems. I cannot expand any more on this at the moment, but I will say that the Amiga is featuring very, very strongly as art of our plans."

How soon will this hybrid machine come to market and what about future plans?

"I will be in the market with this product around about September and I firmly believe that the effort we are putting into research and development and the direction that our R&D boys wish to take says to me that this time next year PIOS will have made quite mark on the UK market, perhaps not in volume sales, but on the technology side people will recognise what PIOS have achieved."

Leap forward

So what PIOS is aiming for is a technological leap in computer capability?

"Absolutely".

And John Smith himself has a personal financial stake in this success?

"Oh yes. I'm a company founder. If ever I needed something to succeed, this is the one. And research and development beyond what we will be producing in September is the key to long term success."

It's obvious from what VIScorp have said about competitors using their technology that either PIOS or Phase 5 will have to consider closely the legal implications of any crossover between these projects and Amiga, but John Smith was hesitant about saying whether PIOS is talking to VIScorp, or what talks with VIScorp might involve.

He was also also coy about what sort of hybrid the September machine will be, but the obvious route with a Motorola chipset would be a crossover Mac/Amiga, but if the Power PC chip is used, PC emulation or a PC system could not be ruled out. The idea of going with two systems should give the PIOS machine a broader market base too and as long as it furthers Amiga we'll be happy to cover it.

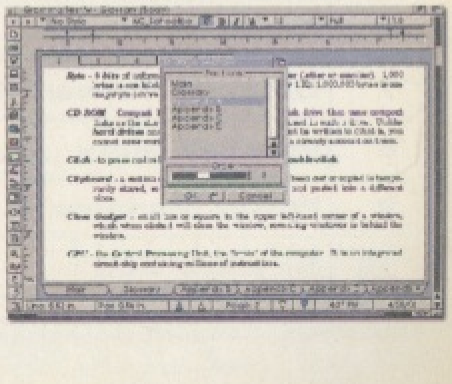
We have been promised a clearer view of their plans next month.

Final Writer 5

The war of the Word processors continues with a Version 5 release of Final Writer.

Softwood Products, who rival Digita in the Amiga business software scene, are confident that their latest product has everything a modern word processor needs: including HTML support for creating on-line documents.

Final Writer is now also available for PC, and its development for this much larger market, and competition with products like Microsoft Word, has had an influence on the features available, which seems to have been mostly positive. Because of this it seems as though it will only optimally run on accelerated AGA machines, but it is compatible with others. It should provide the professional user with what they need though, and we should have a review next month.



Zip success



Iomega recently celebrated the success of their Zip and Jaz drives at a series of press conferences in London by announcing their storage increase/price reduction plan for the future. At the moment Zip, the 100Mb system costs £170 and the disks £10 each, while Jaz costs £500 and its 1Gb disks weigh in at £90. Both systems have received CU Amiga Magazine Super Star awards (Zip in August 1995 received 96% and Jaz in May 1996 received 93%), and indeed Iomega were keen to point out the role the Amiga has played in their success here in the UK. The long term plan is to reduce he cost of the media for both machines as well as increasing the capacity.

Iomega envisage Zip becoming the new floppy standard and thus hope to have the price of the 100Mb disks it uses down to £2-3 within a few years. They hope to have a dramatic decrease in the price of Jaz cartridges too.

Iomega were originally principally known for their tape back-up systems, but the move into media such as Zip and Jaz has transformed the company, resulting in sales increasing by over 400% year on year. They intend to achieve lower pricing by forming alliances with other companies to mass produce disks. We reported three months ago that they had signed a deal with Escom to put Zip into new computers from hat company and they have now signed up with many other PC manufacturers, including Acer, who intend to produce a floppy only based machine (how original) but using Zip.

With the release of the marginally faster Surf Squirrel by HiSoft both Zip and Jaz come even more highly recommended by us. The bigger they get the cheaper the disks will get too, so if you need lots of storage and want to move it about conveniently, get in contact with HiSoft now on 0500 223660.

Amiga Top 10

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2	Worms	Ocean
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5	Sensi World Of Soccer 95/96	Warner
6	Super Skidmarks	Guildhall
7	Ultimate Soccer Manager	Sierra
8	Football Glory	Hit Squad
9	Player Manager 2	Virgin
10	Sensible Golf	Virgin

Bourdin leaves Amiga Technologies



Ex-journalist and now ex-PR man Giles Bourdin has been ousted from his post at Amiga Technologies in the staff rationalisation that has taken place since VIScorp announced their intention of taking over the company.

We reported in June that AT had shed a lot of staff because, according to Mr Bourdin himself, there was going to be R&D duplication and there were internal problems which had to be sorted out. Now he too has fallen victim to this axe. According to him:

"VIScorp have their own press relations representative in Europe, Eric Laffont, and there was not really room for both of us.

"I used to work with Eric as an Amiga journalist in France and I'm sure all will go well with him. I know that Petro [Tyschtschenko, AT's Managing Director] was happy with my work but there obviously isn't room for two of us at VIScorp. I wish the Amiga the best of luck."

Eagle deal signed

Eagle Systems, the German based manufacturer, have signed an official deal with Amiga Technologies to badge their products 4000T.

Even better news received from Eagle Systems is that they intend to sell a version of the A1200 too. Blittersoft are quoting a machine powered by a 68040 (the same chip as the standard 4000 uses).

Prices range from £800 for the A1200T to £2200 for the mother of all towers, the 50MHz 68060 £4000T.

Blittersoft will also customise the machines with whatever kit you want including massive hard drives, CD-ROMs, graphics boards and more.

We hope to get the Eagle family of machines in for review very soon. In the meantime, for more information call Blittersoft on 01908 261466.

In brief

Click Boom decide to go it alone

Click Boom, the Canadian developers of promising fighting game Capital Punishment have decided to go it alone as far as distributing it in the UK.

The game, pencilled for a September release, was considered by several big publishing houses in this country and Click Boom were hopeful that Ocean would snap it up but, according to its Project Manager, Alexander Petrovic, "Ocean loved the game, but they were unwilling to take it on. They were not very clear about the reason for this though. They said that it was because of 'internal policy' and they had some meetings about it, but they didn't say much else. They just can't take on any more Amiga games at the moment."

However, Click Boom intend to contract distribution themselves and we hope to see them and the finished game back in the UK soon.

Buck not Bile!

Our sincere apologies to William Buck, President of VISCorp, who was unintentionally renamed Bill Bile in a caption on the news pages of last month's magazine. He was mentioned several times in the article by his correct name, but this typo seemed to slip our subbing net. CU Amiga Magazine apologise.

Aminet the biggest!

As they move onto CD number 12, Aminet has now been confirmed as the biggest FTP site in the world.

With over 5 gigabytes of active software available for downloading, this Amiga service surpasses anything in the PC or Mac spheres.

Aminet, the brainchild of Urban Müeller is the site where all the latest PD, shareware, licenceware and demos are uploaded, as regular readers of this magazine will know. It has also been downloaded onto 12 CDs by Stefan Ossowski's GTI and the material is available to those without a modem or a CD-ROM drive via numerous PD houses.

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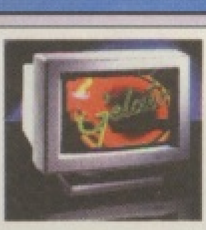
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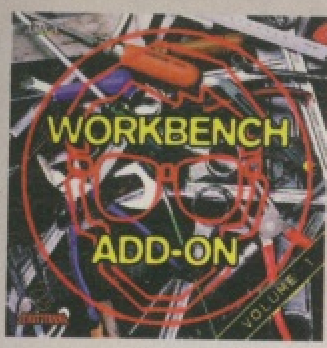
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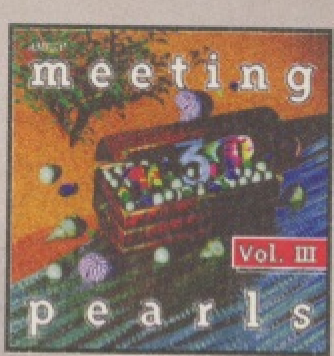
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The CD covers all areas of interest, all, the programmer, the user, the creative and the gamer will find what they are looking for. On this CD-ROM there are many shareware programs, some of them at a special price, if you get registered. There is e.g. Shapeshifter for 40.- DM (instead of 50.- DM), in addition to this there is a 50 MB Mac partition, so that you can start playing around with Mac applications right away. Then there is PowerPlayer for 20.- DM (instead of 30.- DM), there are, of course, loads of modules with it, so that you can try it right away. AmiWin, the new X11-server for the Amiga is available for $40, instead of $50. You can sa ve more than 100.- DM with this CD. Therefore you only have to send in the appropriate page in the booklet to the author of the program. £24.95



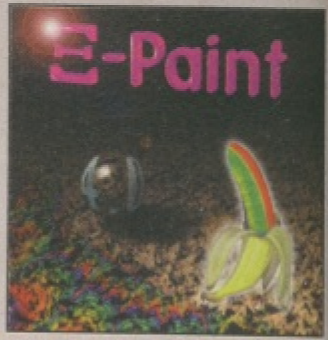
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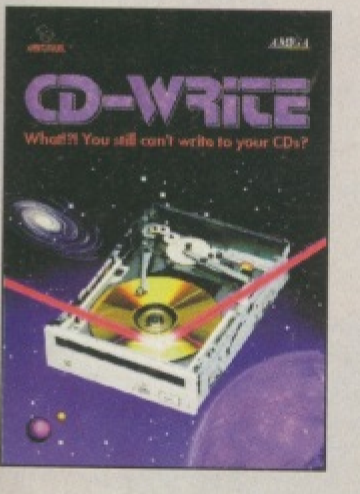
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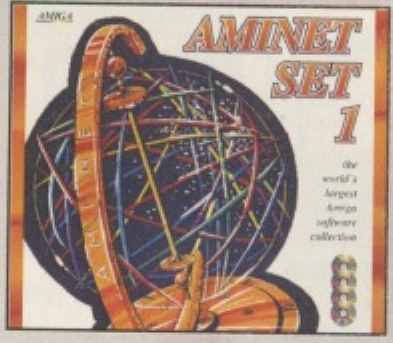
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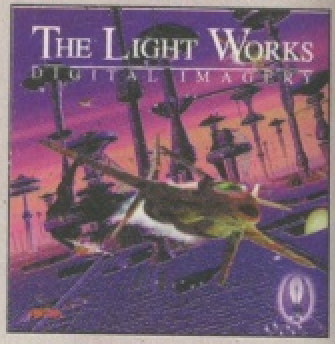
Aminet Set 1

Aminet is the world´s largest collection of freely distributable Amiga software. Up to 10.000 users access the vast archives ervery day and countless programmers publish directly via Aminet. Until recently access to Aminet was restricted to international network users. With Aminet Set 1, consisting of 4 CDs, the complete archive is published the first time. This CD-ROM-collection, which is dated January 1995, offers an almost inexhaustible reservoir of top-value Shareware. A wide variety of programs is included: Applications, Games, Demos, Pictures, Mods, Animations, Developer-Material, ... It contains approximately 4 gigabytes of software in 12.500 archives and you will enjoy the comfortable user-interface. £29.95



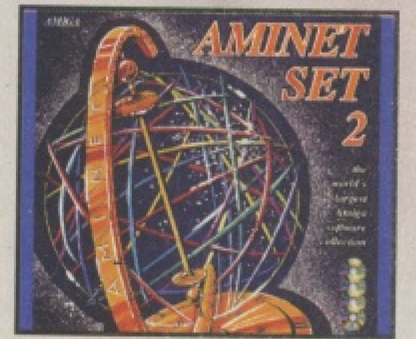
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Aminet 12

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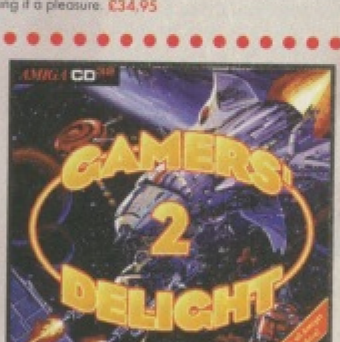
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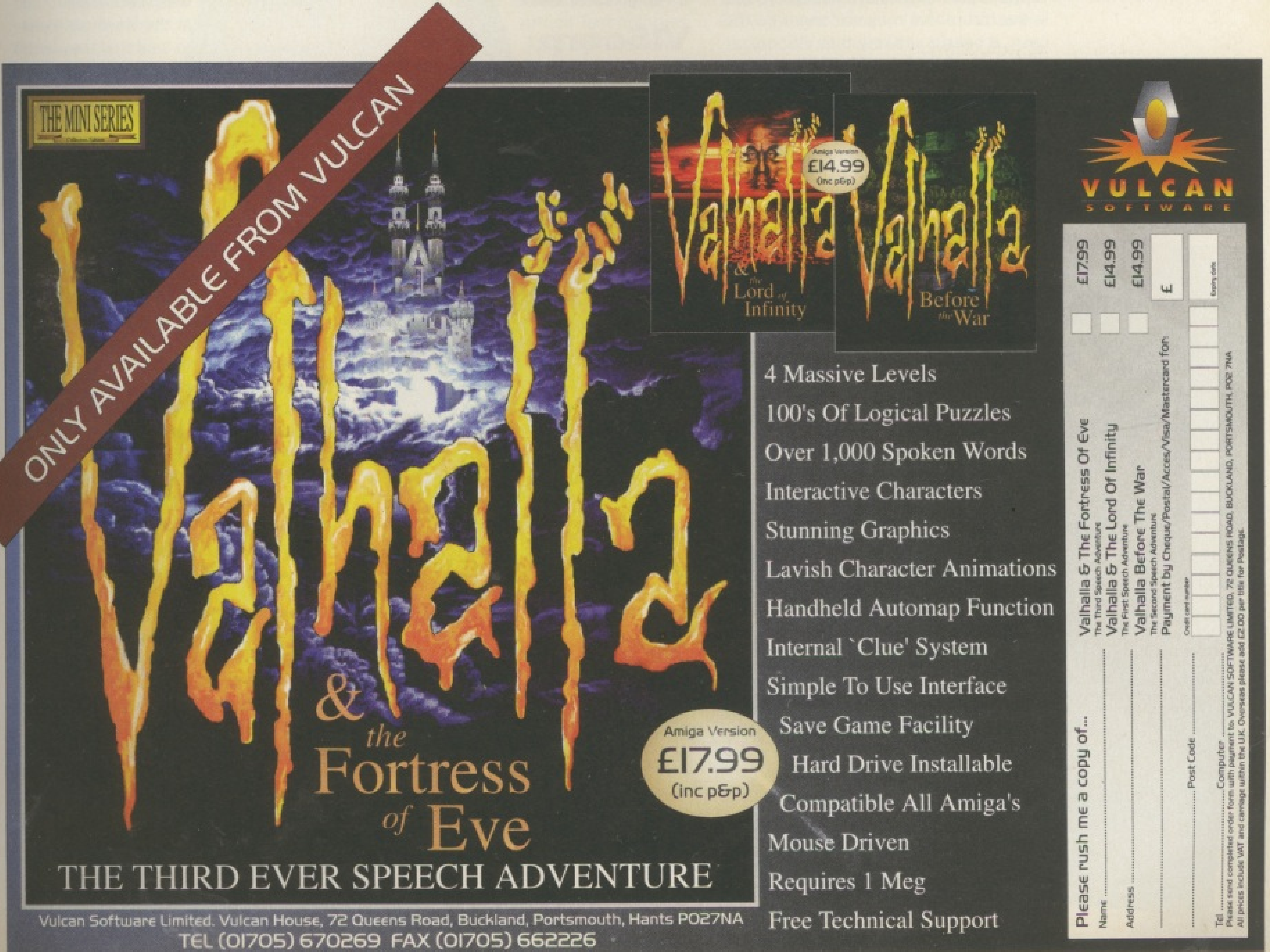
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What future for

In the wake of the second switch of Amiga technology ownership Alan Dykes and John Kennedy examine just what the future holds for the computer of your choice, the companies involved and the technology which will be used.

When is an Amiga not an Amiga? When it isn't called Amiga. This is not a joke at the moment Amiga Technologies have licenced the names A4000 and A1200 to Eagle Systems with the proviso that their documentation says 'Amiga Based', not Amiga. So now we have the Eagle A4000T and the Eagle A1200T. These brands retain the essential ingredients of the name of the machine they are based on, but in the future this may no longer be the case. It seems unlikely that VIScorp's ED will be called the ED 1200, even though it is based on the A1200. Phase 5's Power PC machine could be called anything, as could PIOS computers. All have said that they are continuing to support and develop Amiga based products but will they all name them Amiga? We think not. And why should they? If there are several competing companies trying to sell Amiga based computers they will have to live or die on the merits of their own brand name. Gateway 2000, Olivetti and Compaq all manufacture and sell 'PC compatibles'. You buy a Gateway or a Compaq. In the future you'll buy a PIOS or a Phase 5 'Amiga compatible'. Or will you?

VIScorp

The new owners of Amiga would now seem to be interested in producing an Amiga branded 'desktop computer'. And hurrah for them if it's true. The ins and outs of this are discussed by Alan Dykes in points of view (and this article has also spawned an opinion from John Kennedy) but they seem to have made their intentions clear in their press release of 19th June 1996 (see news). They have complete copyright control of the Amiga operating system and chipset, the only thing they don't have copyright control over in your Amiga are its peripherals, add-ons and the non-native chips supplied by Motorola. But with the ED being A1200 based and the size and strength of the competition from Motorola's mortal enemy Intel, they will no doubt be very interested in what VIScorp has to offer in the way of uses for their chps – 68000 series and PowerPC included.

Just what could VIScorp do though? Anything. They have negotiated with Motorola already, and will probably do so again, but this has been in secret and they haven't told us what was said – though a shot was fired across Motorola's bow at the Toulouse meeting, when VIScorp said that they hadn't made any decision about PowerPC as the next generation platform. Anything said in the past by Amiga representatives concerning this was water under the bridge. They might even consider the DEC Alpha RISC.

Either way, if and when VIScorp produce a RISC Amiga it will be tantalisingly powerful – the DEC Alpha is a 300MHz chip versus the newest PowerPC's 200MHz. Your standard Amiga 1200 uses old technology chips and runs at 14MHz. Ow! More on the chip options open to VIScorp later, but one thing is clear: VIScorp have a very big market capitalisation and although the set-top box concept is their bread and butter, maybe Amiga could be their honey. Tell VIScorp what you want by using the FREEPOST letter on page 25. It doesn't cost you anything extra and it will get your opinion across.



PIOS

Of the companies who want to produce Amiga PIOS are the the new kids on the block, and some industry sources have written them off before they've even started. But if the idea is right and the brand is pushed, they could succeed. How? Well the Amiga is about to go back to its infancy because the current product is out of date as far as the market is concerned. That is not to say that your machine is

rAmiga?



▲ 'WIntel' machines like this Gateway 2000 have now capitalised the mass market, with sheer brute force processors and excellent graphics capabilities. But a RISC Amiga would be even more powerful.

rubbish – it's brilliant, but would you upgrade to another one of the same? No, of course not, the A4000T and the A1200 are both old, if very capable, machines. 'Next generation Amiga' is the buzzword and everyone knows this. To quote John Smith, ex of Commodore and Amiga Technologies: "The existing Amiga is now too old. Rightly or wrongly, and I'm inclined to think rightly, the next generation will be different. Different in chipset, different in operating system, different in many other ways. This is the direction our R&D is taking" .

The other reason you can't write off PIOS is that they want to have a PIOS branded computer out by September this year. Most industry sources thought that NEXT September would be a struggle for them. How are they going to do this? By producing a hybrid computer. Basing it on two platforms with a licence for each operating system and ROM. Will it be Mac and Amiga? Will it be PC and Amiga? or, heaven forbid will it be Mac and PC? The latter seems unlikely, again to quote Smith "Three of the founding seven members of PIOS are from an Amiga background, I think that speaks for itself when questions are asked about the direction we are going to research and develop in the future".

But why not just an Amiga? "Unit sales" according to Smith. In order to fund research PIOS needs to sell something and by appealing to two markets the chances of doing this are much higher. And just from the Amiga point of view, if PIOS are putting together a system with the guts to tackle Mac or PC, then imagine what AmigaOS will be like on it?

Phase 5

The longest serving of the companies involved in next generation Amiga development is Phase 5, makers of the Blizzard range of accelerators. They have the firmest commitment to the Amiga as a future PowerPC platform. Their PowerUP program – an accelerator card equipped with PowerPC is already complete and was shown by the company in a glass box at CeBIT this year. Nothing was seen in operation but Phase 5 are aggressively selling their idea in Germany and could be the first company off the starting block with a working 'next generation' Amiga.

Anyone who read last month's news story entitled "Phase 5 to build Amiga compatible" will appreciate the type of hot metal machine the Frankfurt based company want to produce. If you haven't we strongly advise you look back at it. They are talking about a 120MHz based system, and it could be ready this year – at the very latest by CeBIT next Spring.



▲ The Walker – gone but not forgotten.

One of the biggest problems Phase 5 will encounter (after they've managed to develop the system) is their hostility to Amiga Technologies. Although the main beef is between them and Escom, whom they think made a shambles of the Amiga's relaunch, Amiga Technologies and their new masters VIScorp have no doubt felt the heat of Phase 5 boss Wolf Dietrich's invective.

Although Phase 5 are talking about using a separate OS, Amiga compatible, but different to Amiga Technologies' one, there will at some stage have to be some crossover. As VIScorp have already announced that they will take legal action against even slight infringements of their copyright, Phase 5 would probably do well to smoke the pipe of peace with Bill Buck, if not directly with Petro Tyschtschenko, to ensure a friction free future. Also, if it's going to be Amiga compatible, they might as well be able to say it is without fear of lawsuit.

Distribution

The other problem relates to distribution. With the Escom stores out of the frame, who will stock all these new computers? PIOS have John Smith here in the UK, Phase 5 have a network of Bizzard suppliers and are said to be talking to David Pleasance to tap his experience, but Amiga Technologies have no representatives here now that Smith has left and the Escom ties have been cut. The closest VIScorp office is in the south of France.

What retailer is going to take on the Amiga after the problems it has had? Plenty if they can be persuaded it can sell, but the right marketing and adequate effort has to go into this.

A history lesson

When the Amiga was first launched, the Motorola family of microprocessors was the obvious choice. With the 68000, Motorola had started from scratch to create a true 16-bit processor. Unlike Intel, makers of the 80286, 386, 486 and Pentium family, Motorola decided to abandon any plans for 'backwards compatibility'. There was no need for tricks such as Intel-style memory addressing (an Intel processor can have several addresses for the same memory locations). There would be no hardware imposed limits of 640K. The 68000 microprocessor would be good at supporting multitasking and as it saw memory as one flat area, it made programming easier.

> **"The existing Amiga is now too old, the next generation will be different."**
>
> **JOHN SMITH**

At the launch therefore, the 68000 was an impressive chip and the ideal choice to build a new computer around. The designers of the Amiga also knew that better Motorola chips would follow in the form of the 68020 and 68030 too. All this along with improved performance, 32-bit power, higher operating speeds, support for Floating Point Units and Memory Management. Things were looking good. The 68040 was even more stunning, with an integral

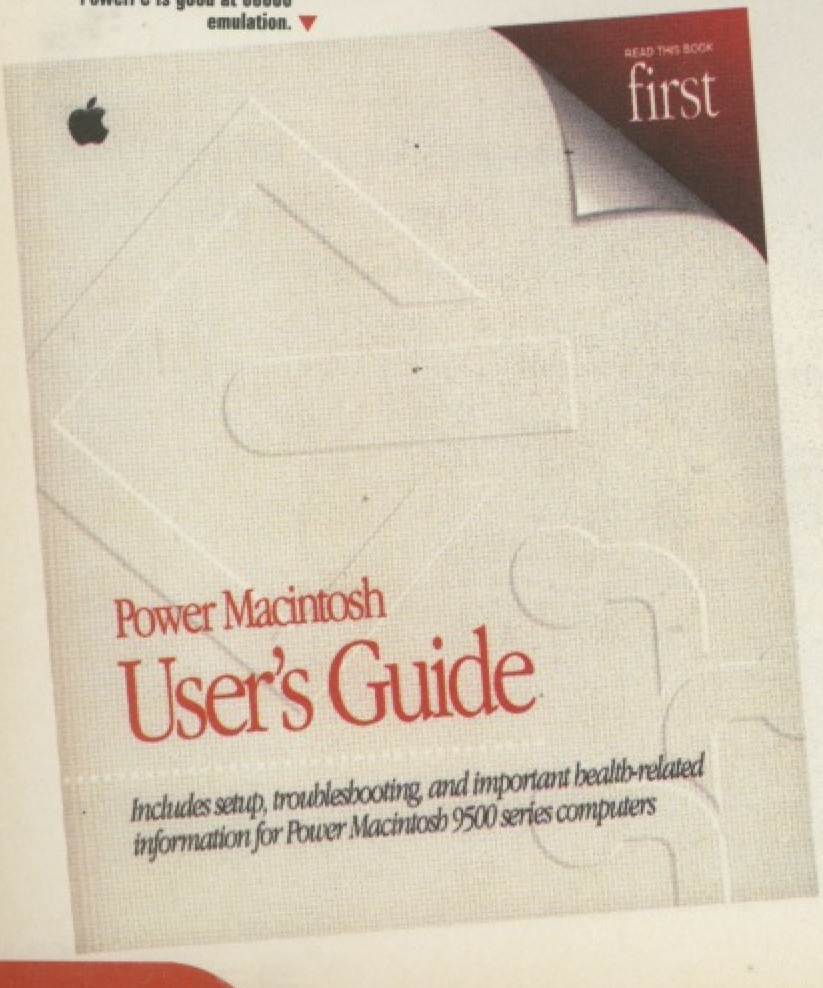
Floating Point Processor and impressive speed.

The 68050 chip never appeared but the 68060 doubled the speed over the 68040 and crammed in some new features. Sadly, the limitations of the 6800 family are now obvious. The decision to make the 6800 processors 'do everything' devices rather than lean, mean RISC machines means that improving performance further gets extremely difficult. There are only so many components which can be fabricated onto a silicon wafer in a reliable and cost-effective way. The 68060 pushed this to the limit and is therefore destined to be the last of the series. In the meantime, the Intel family has continued to be improved. The near total dominance of so-called 'WIntel' computers (using Windows and Intel processors – ie PCs) has meant there is a huge demand for increased performance and huge amounts of money at stake.

The Motorola series may have been in great demand by Amiga and Apple users, but the numbers are small in comparison to PC Intel chips. Because of economies of scale Intel chip prices seem to fall on a monthly or weekly basis, whilst Motorola chips are in short supply and thus higher priced. In fact a few months ago, 68030 processors, the basis for most accelerators, were unavailable!

The Intel Pentium chip is a very powerful piece of silicon, and the entry level chip now runs at 100MHz (or 120MHz by the time you read this), much faster than even a top of the range 68060. However, the processing power of the CPU was never the sole point of the Amiga. The heart of the system, and the reason it out-classed rival 68000 machines like the Mac, while running rings around the PCs of the day, was the custom hardware. The Amiga is really a multiple processor device. The Motorola chip ticked away in the centre, running programs and holding everything together, but graphics and sound are taken care of independently. The PAD (Paula, Agnus and Denise) custom chips were stunning when the Amiga first appeared. A separate processor, the Copper, looked after the Amiga display, and made possible multiple simultaneous screenmodes, smooth scrolling and thousands of colours. Later, the AGA chipset provided a few tweaks, improved speed and more colours.

The Motorola/IBM PowerPC chip was the logical choice for Apple, who also originally used the 68000 series of chips. PowerPC is good at 68000 emulation. ▼



Unlike PCs, the Amiga has always been geared towards video. Displaying the Amiga Workbench on a colour portable TV and using a Genlock to add DIY subtitles were features even today other machines have real problems with.

More Power?

The end of the Motorola 6800 family makes it obvious that a new processor family is required ASAP to carry the Amiga forward. Whilst the Amiga was in suspended animation, Apple progressed from the 6800 to the PowerPC range. This move was a logical choice at the time because the PowerPC is superb at emulation, 6800 emulation in particular, which makes porting software – such as the operating systems – much quicker. Companies such as Phase 5 are keen on this solution, and have promised accelerator cards based on the PowerPC "real soon now." On the downside, the PowerPC doesn't appear to be as fast as many people hoped, and with the success and relatively low-price of Pentium systems, it no longer appears the panacea it once did. But don't fret, the Motorola-IBM consortium which produce it are updating it and there are plenty of alternatives to choose from too – which are being looked at by VIScorp.

The DEC Alpha processor has been mentioned, and it would be remiss not to mention the latest ARM processor s from once-rivals Acorn too: they are extremely fast and very, very power efficient.

Graphics?

Initially, the video friendly aspects of the Amiga display were winning combinations. Few people could justify a dedicated computer monitor, and those that did were rewarded only with a slightly crisper image rather than new resolutions. Now things are different. The price and performance of SVGA monitors make them widespread (indeed it has been a PC philosophy to sell them with every machine sold), and it makes sense to take advantage of the larger screen



▲ Design cues for A1200, but the A600 lacked AGA chipset.

resolutions possible. These days, a 640 by 256 display is simply too small for anything other than simple games. The minimum should be 800 by 600 and preferably 1024 by 768.

Doom, the game which was probably instrumental in almost killing the Amiga as a games machine, exploited the one thing which PC graphics cards were very good at: chunky pixel displays. Whereas the Amiga loves bitplanes and playfields, the PC likes dealing with individual pixels – this makes drawing textures very quick, and that means 3D games like Doom, Duke Nukem, Descent and Quake. Any new graphics system for the Amiga needs to be able to operate in a Chunky way. If the AGA chipset is only going to be tinkered with and sped up, it won't make a big difference. Instead, for a good indication of how things could be done, look at the CyberGraphics system which is used to emulate ordinary Amiga operations on third party graphics cards.

CyberGraphics supports practically all Amiga Workbench programs with a host of features. A new 3D library is due soon which could be one of the most important additions to Amiga graphics in recent years.

The future?

Those first decisions to make the Amiga a 6800 machine have now got to be taken again. There is no use VIScorp going with a DEC Alpha chip, PIOS going with a Acorn ARM and Phase 5 going with a PowerPC. It will be VIScorp's responsibility to ensure that there is some level of compatibility and strength of purpose. To police the market. There are many opportunities open for varying companies. VIScorp attach the greatest priority to their ED, Phase 5 are attempting their PowerPC based PC killer and PIOS are producing a hybrid machine, with designs on an advanced 'next generation' machine next year.

We have gone past the Walker stage, we are now on the edges of a new frontier. If the 'next generation' looks different, even if it goes under a different name, as long as it conforms to the superior ease of use, performance, value and customisabilty that were always the hallmarks of the Amiga, it will keep the Amiga fan happy. ■

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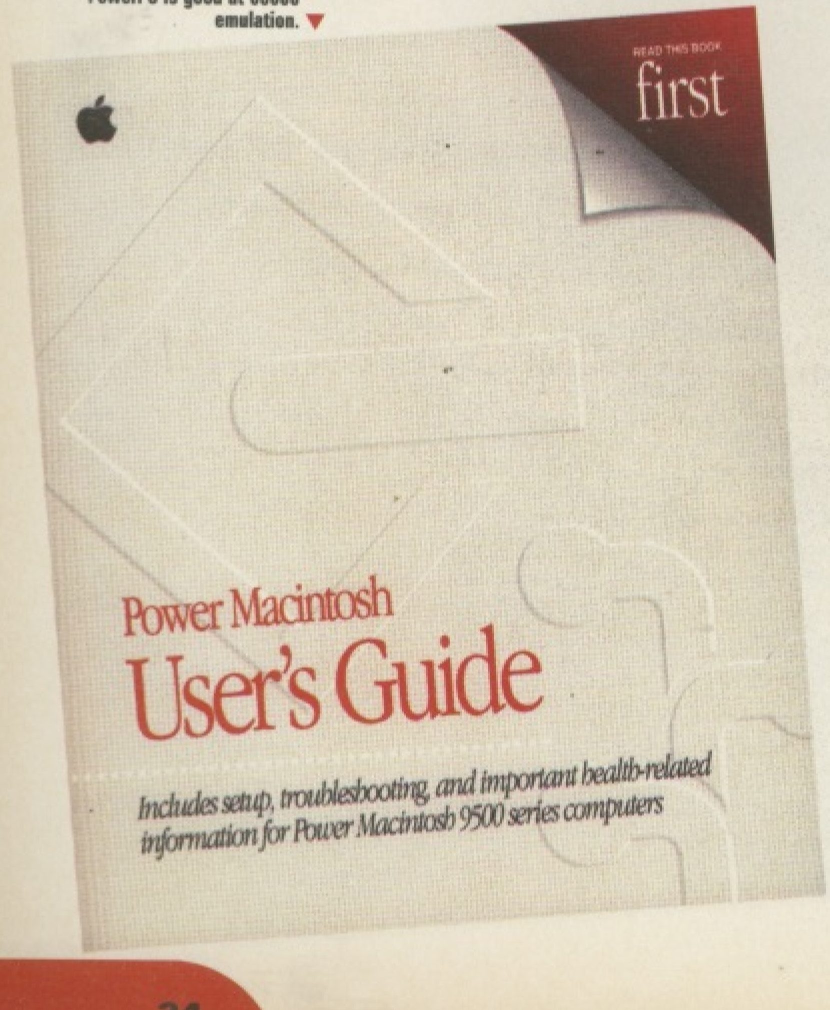
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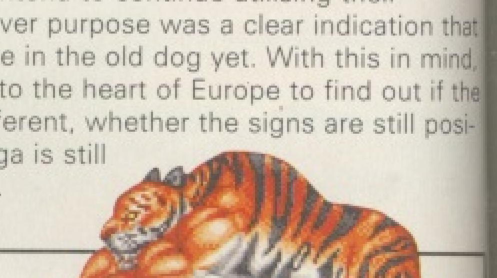
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Euro View

Part Tw

We continue our investigation once more into the European market to see how the Amiga is faring amongst our continental friends ...

Last month, we spoke to our German and Scandinavian opposites in an effort to establish how solid the Amiga is in those territories. While the news was inevitably that its market share had fallen having sustained blows from PC hardware, there was encouragement in what has effectively become a universal club. The overwhelming sense of loyal Amiga users who intend to continue utilising their machine for whatever purpose was a clear indication that there's plenty of life in the old dog yet. With this in mind, we head deeper into the heart of Europe to find out if the situation is any different, whether the signs are still positive and if the Amiga is still making headway....



Italy

Located: Enviously close to the equator
Famous for: Ferraris; fashion; mafia
Our contact: Max Reynaud, The Games Machine

"I think we are now the only magazine in Italy to cover Amiga products – all the Amiga magazines have disappeared. In TGM, we allocate around eight pages each month to games. The Amiga is still popular over here but mainly among coders and the demo scene. Most gamesplayers have shifted to PC. Also, the Playstation is getting more and more popular and the Saturn is not too far behind. As for the CD32? It never made an impression.



Will we ever see Light Shock's Fighting Spirit in the UK? Let's hope so.

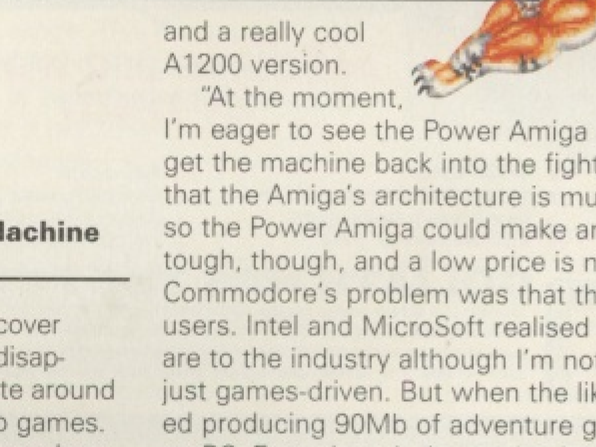
"In the past, the Amiga was very popular. Even now, 10 to 15% of our readers are Amiga users which is a high proportion.The Amiga community is very close knit, they love their machine. Commodore sold in excess of 500,000 Amigas in Italy. But retail support is virtually non-existent with most distributors having stopped carrying Amigas. Part of the problem here is piracy, it plays a major part. If you want software, people tend to look to bulletin boards etc.

"In saying this, the Doom clones are in demand. Alien Breed 3D2: The Killing Grounds look absolutely amazing and I'm really looking forward to seeing more of this. There's a game that's been developed in Italy by Light Shock called Fighting Spirit and this is great. It's a beat 'em up with huge sprites, lots of colours and a really cool A1200 version.

"At the moment, I'm eager to see the Power Amiga as this could get the machine back into the fight. I've always thought that the Amiga's architecture is much better than the PC's so the Power Amiga could make an impact. It will be tough, though, and a low price is needed. I think Commodore's problem was that they under-evaluated the users. Intel and MicroSoft realised how important games are to the industry although I'm not saying the industry is just games-driven. But when the likes of LucasArts started producing 90Mb of adventure game, they had to do it on PC. Even though the market here is PC oriented, the Amiga still has a chance to fight back with the Power Amiga. I hope it does because I love the machine."

The old 'wait and see' policy strikes again

"Before we decide whether or not to develop more titles for the Amiga, we are going to wait and see how sucecessful Fighting Spirit is" according to Light Shock Entertainment. The game should be available across all of Europe in two weeks or so and we think the market will react very well. We think it is important to have good games out there. The first-person perspective shoot 'em ups are very good, particularly Alien Breed 3D, and they show that you don't have to buy more powerful machines to get that kind of game. I hope VIScorp make an effort to produce faster machines. And although the chipset and Operating System of the Amiga is good, I hope they make them better."



France

Located: At the end of a long tunnel
Famous for: Cantona; cuisine; fried amphibian appendages (yeuch)
Our contact: Stephan Schreiber, Amiga Dream

"The Amiga is not widely available in France. Only the dedicated retailers sell Amiga hardware and software while distributors seem to have forgotten the machine. I think it will be a year or two before this changes – until the new machines from VIScorp arrive. French developed software is very rare indeed – TV Paint is certainly the most famous. The French market is based on foreign software, mainly from the USA, UK and Germany. And the worst is, this software isn't even localised which, of course, doesn't help the Amiga in France.

"Over here, the Tower kits for the A1200 sell better than anything else. They generally come fitted with an accelerator card (in most cases, a Blizzard IV) and some extra memory. The serious software doesn't sell very well mainly because they're not translated into French but the games continue to sell well. Also, CD-ROMs (Aminet, etc) do well. What we expect the most is good software in French (yes, I insist!). It's a pity to see good products like Wordworth 5, ImageFX 2 or Final Writer not being translated – the publishers lose potential customers. Few people here speak English well enough to buy this software when it is still in English. Not to mention products sold solely in German ...

"You ask me how the prices compare. Well, a Magic Pack costs about £400, the M1484S for £290 and an A4000T for £2375. And we've never seen a Surfer pack around here. The Amiga is still popular in France among its users. Everybody agrees it is a good machine but it lacks some truly good professional applications (as compared to the PC market). It's hard to determine the Amiga's market share over here since no studies have been made for at least two years. What I can tell you is that there are about 25-30 magazines for the PC and only two for the Amiga.

"The Amiga market was at its largest four years ago. There were dozens of games and serious software published each week but, as you might guess, this has changed significantly. Before the PC became a so-called 'multimedia' computer, other platforms such as the Amiga and Atari ST were really appreciated by the French public. Let me say that I think the Amiga still has a future in France but it needs significant improvements to both the hardware and the OS.

"As it stands, its future will be that of a cult machine: the editors don't pay any more attention to the Amiga as a games machine and the serious software can't really compete with the PC software. It could, however, be resurrected as a network computer but again this will require good software and better hardware.



"I think the recent take-over can only benefit the Amiga. If VIScorp do what they say they will do, then that's good. I was recently told that if Escom hadn't sold Amiga Technologies to Viscorp, they would simply have stopped their activities.

"Turning the Amiga into a network computer isn't a bad thing if the machine can still be expanded to a real, productive computer. I believe VIScorp is aware of this.

"Commodore got things wrong with their marketing options. They didn't manage to position the Amiga against the competition. Their theory seemed to be, 'We're making a games machine but, with some expansion, it can also be used as a productivity machine," while the competition were saying, "We're making a productivity machine that may also be used for gaming." So the base model (A500, A1200) was not sufficient for the power user and the high-end Amiga (A3000, A4000) simply hadn't a good enough price/quality ratio.

"Commodore failed to tell their customers something like: 'We have a cheap computer that is good at video and multimedia applications, something you can't easily do with a PC. And, of course, you can still use a word processor, a 24-bit paint program, and play with the Amiga.'

"I hope the next generation of Amiga will be much faster than the current one. The OS is quite good (though it too could be improved) but the hardware – the AGA chipset – is definitely too slow. Nowadays, 256-colours should be a strict minimum, not a hardly-reached maximum. Debating on whether to use chunky or planar video modes isn't the real point. What is important is the speed and responsiveness of the hardware."





■ Fears: one of the great games that was born in France. Will we see any more? Qui ou non?

The publisher: Ocean France

"We recognise there is still a good Amiga market in France. But what we do on Amiga has to be looked at on a wider scale because sales have to be achieved in more countries than just France. The final decision on what we do is made by Ocean UK. You should speak to them because they recently conducted an investigation into the overall market."

Unfortunately, Ocean UK were unwilling to share their findings with CU Amiga Magazine.

Hungary

Located: Eastern Europe ... difficult to find without a map
Famous for: Sounding famished; Dracula
Our contact: Akos Bognar, IDG Hungary

"There is very little magazine coverage of Amiga in Hungary – most articles are about PC and console machines. The last Amiga magazine closed two or three months ago.

"However, there are still quite a few places which sell hardware and software. I even have a friend who owns a shop which specialises in Amiga so there is still the demand. His sales have recently dropped and he is finding it very difficult though.

"It is hard to tell you anything else because the Amiga is not very important in Hungary any more – facts and figures are impossible to get hold of. I'm afraid it's very much PC these days."

Poland

Located: In a cold and barren part of Europe
Famous for: Words that are difficult to spell
Our contact: Marcin Dzyniski, Secret

"The Amiga has always had problems with piracy in Poland. Much software is available here but it is only through the black market. I think the Amiga is still popular here but with groups of people who know each other and swop software with each other. People don't have much money to buy games with so they have to do it on the black market and even then they are sometimes very old. I think Alien Breed 3D is very good and so is Gloom. The Sensible Soccer games are also very good. The Amiga has some excellent games but people need to feel good and confident about the machine or software houses will stop developing for it.



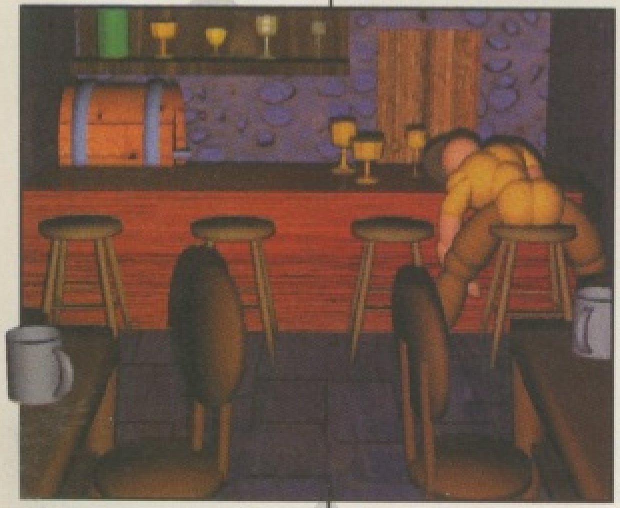
Right: Games like Cannon Fodder are popular in Poland, unfortunately mainly on the pirate scene.

"If the standard Amiga had a CD drive built-in, this would help prevent piracy and we would see even better games. But you need a keyboard and not a console machine like the CD32. I think the Amiga is a very good machine and will be around for a long time."

Slovakia

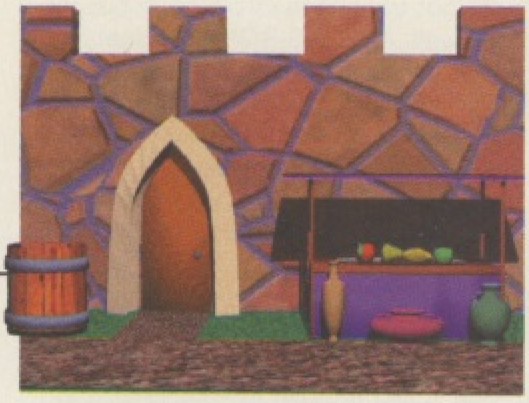
Located: In sunny south central Europe
Famous for: Being at the end of Czech for a long time
Our contact: Our man in a telephone box

As far as we could see there are no Amiga magazines in Slovakia, but there certainly are Amigas and just to prove it we managed to get hold of a company producing games. There's a publishing company in the heart of Slovakia which has been developing games for the past two years. Top international hacks that we are CU Amiga Magazine have come into possession of exclusive screens of these and we'll hopefully see them released in this country later in the year.



EXCLUSIVE first shots of Shadow of the Devil(bottom right) and Abduction (above).

The first of these is Shadow Of The Devil, a point and click adventure game featuring some absolutely gorgeous 256-colour graphics. As a seemingly uncontrollable evil force spreads across the land, you are the sole person who can stop the nightmare. This contemporary horror story may



come attached with an age rating certificate if the toffee-nosed censors get hold of it but we'll have to wait and see. Also from the same company is Abduction. Details on this adventure game are very scarce but we are promised an original storyline, brain-taxing problems and plenty of sexy animations and rendered graphics. Take a look at the screenshots and make up your own minds.

Both Shadow Of The Devil and Abduction will run on all 1Mb Amigas. The only question now is who will be publishing the games in this country. More news as and when we hear it but you can rely on CU Amiga Magazine to let you know what's happening first.



And so ...

It is fair to say and to reiterate that the loyal Amiga user has not yet deserted the machine. Since the information seeping from VIScorp appears to be supportive of Amiga technology and other companies are promising to produce clones it is only a matter of time before new and exciting hardware is back on the shelves. And this is when the loyalty will be repaid – when the Amiga is reinstated as important, desirable technology in the general public's eyes once more.

You cannot blame developers for being coy about their future plans. You cannot blame the press for shifting editorial emphasis to fit in with an ever-changing market. Take note, however, that everyone is still on the edge of their seats, willing things to happen. This undercurrent of expectation will boil over with great zeal when the Amiga is once more thrust into the spotlight. Really, the message is stay with your machine and remain loyal, give Viscorp a chance to get organised and then prepare to face the world with a smug and satisfied smile on your face.

It now only remains to thank everyone who contributed information to this feature. Thanks to our colleagues in Germany, Holland, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Italy, Hungary, France, Poland and Slovakia. And an apology to the Spanish who, no matter who we spoke to, we just couldn't understand. ■

Alan Bunker

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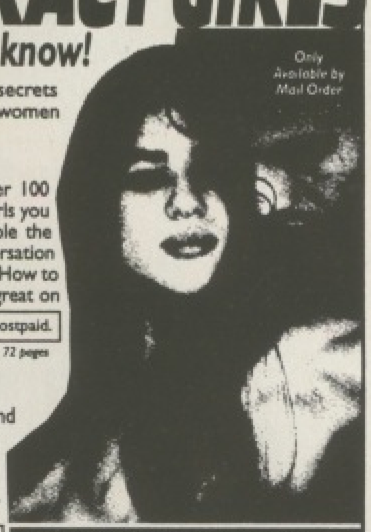
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E& OE

Screen Scene



Plenty of preview material out there this month, in the shape of Reality, Double Agent and Dominions. We've been excited about Flair's Spy Vs Spy clone since ECTS and the preview version looked at for this issue has whetted our appetites even further. Reality is game engine which is intended to appeal to those who don't have a degree in programming. The screens we've seen of the games BPM Promotions, Reality's developer, are producing with it have only filled us with hope about the potential it holds.

Back to the present, for those interested in developing pretty basic games right now, there is The Game Engine, reviewed on page 41. It might seem odd that we have two development tools in the games section rather than Get Serious, but I think this is the proper home for them. Let's face it, if less people are producing games for you, why not produce your own! In the future we will give more space to this sort of thing so it is well worth your while taking notice of these simpler development kits.

My personal favourite game of the month has to be Valhalla. Its new perspective view makes it a much more friendly game to get to grips with. Alan has been obsessed with the neat little platformer Tin Toy in The House Of Fun Adventure. And neat it may be but it has a very long name! Anyway, here's to next month, where TKG, Champ Manager 2, Chaos Engine 2 to mention but a few are still being promised by their respective publishers.

Lisa Collins
Deputy Editor.



Double Agent p34

Reality Game Engine p34



Dominions p34

Previews

Reviews

Tips & Guides

Previews

Reality Game Engine

■ Due for release: July ■ Publisher: BPM

With the current state of the Amiga market in mind it's important that those loyal to the machine start being a bit more self reliant. The foundations of much of today's PC and console software industry was the C64 and Amiga and the latter's relative ease of programming is still one of its major selling points. There are plenty though who do not really have a grasp of programming, nor are they likely to ever be interested in getting one, but who would still like to produce a game. Which might sound a bit like putting the horse before the cart, so to speak, but is still possible. And BPM, a Belfast based company, are aiming for that market.

The Reality Game Engine is intended to be a multi-purpose game development system for those with no previous experience of this sort of endeavour. It's intended to allow you to produce platform, adventure, shoot 'em up and beat 'em up games from its own graphic



database or for you to do your own graphics and then use the reconfigurable game engine to run them.





▲ Nice graphics, shame about the tights, green really isn't his colour.

To demonstrate the concept BPM are in the process of producing some games using this engine, screenshots of which you can see on this page. Comparisons with Lucas Arts are not quite in order, as is self evident, and one of my main worries about this sort of concept is that many projects may come out looking a little too much alike, but the variety of the demos supplied by BPM does not bear this out – there seems to be plenty.

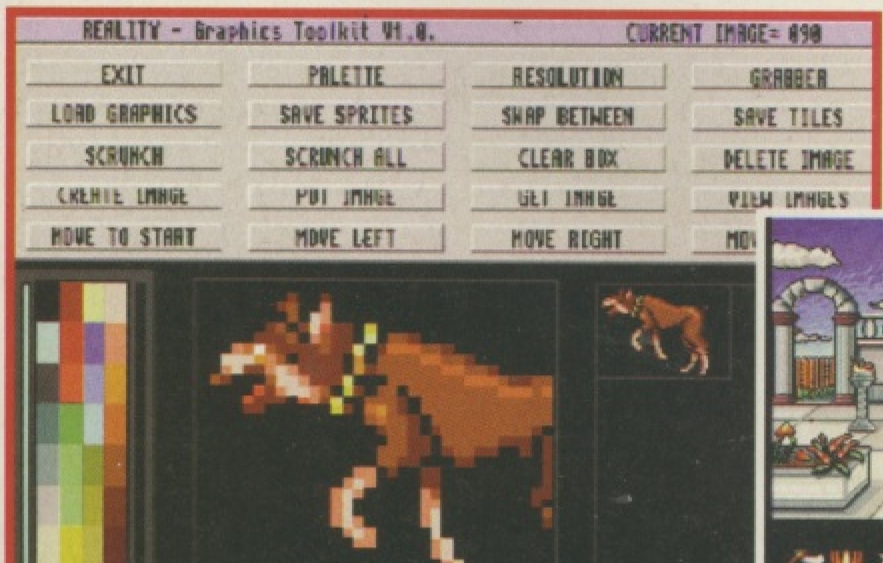
Looking positively at the concept, if you wanted to cut your teeth on game design then a program such as this is going to be a very real option, allowing you to put in a storyline, twiddle about with it and end up with something playable to test the idea and then possibly sell on, if you get the formula right.

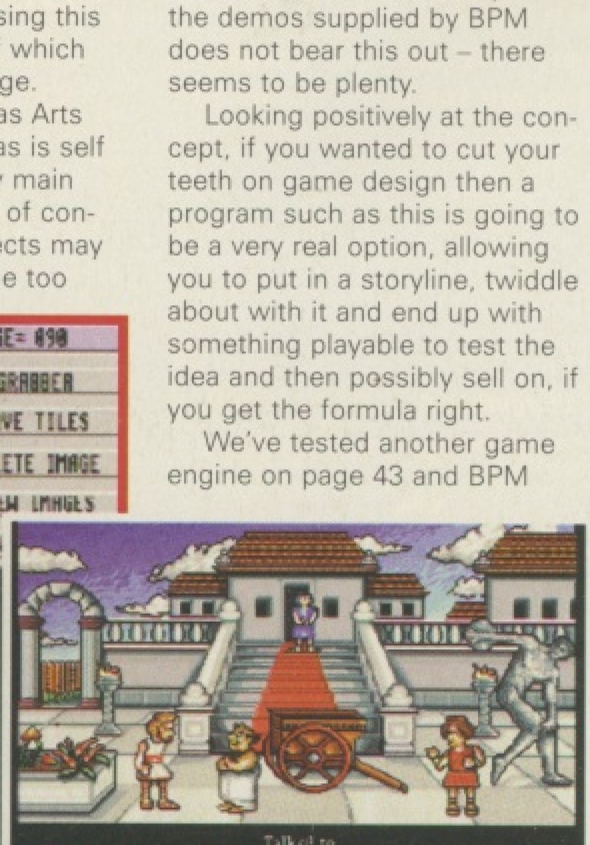
We've tested another game engine on page 43 and BPM expect to send this over to us within the next month or two, complete with a few games, the Robin Hood and Search For The Golden Fleece ones seen here included.

If you want to produce an epic that will put you up there with Andy Braybrook, Archer McClean or Mark Sibly you may need to use at least Blitz and possibly the more complex C, even machine code. But if this is not on your list of priorities Reality shows the sort of promise that could start you off on a development career from a different angle.

• Watch out for the review of Reality and some of the games produced by it ... we could all be pleasantly surprised. I was ■

Martin Davies





▲ It's looking good so far.



Double Agent



■ Due for release: TBA ■ Publisher: Flair

Seen for the first time at ECTS this Spring, Double Agent certainly aroused our interest. It is a derivative of the Spy Vs Spy genre but then this is no bad thing: those games were fun. As with Spy the protagonists are all trenchcoat-wearing, fedora Barnetted secret agent-type fellas. Cigarettes poking out of their mouths they walk around in a hunched up manner – as you do.

The playing screen is horizontally split and this allows a two player game, however, like the forthcoming Chaos Engine 2 it stays this way even in one player mode. This allows you to see what the other character is up to, which is pretty handy.

The basic idea behind double agent is to find objects hidden somewhere in a maze-like building with several storeys. This involves wandering around poking your agent's nose into everything, looking behind fire extinguishers, sofas, plants, in drawers, trunks and even the toilet. No much fun there you may say ... and you'd be right! The mayhem really starts when you realise that hidden behind or in some of these objects are various tricks and weapons. You can pick these up and store them in an inventory and then use them on your opponent. Of course you could discover a trap, which might be a fire bomb, a net or other nasty devices which you can also use on your opponent or vice versa. This is why it's useful to see what the other player is up to. The competition element of the game is to be the first to find some missing objects which are described to you at the beginning of the level, then get them safely to the exit.

Graphics-wise this is a very professional job. The wacky slanted doorways and cute plants, the coke machines and other searchable objects give it the necessary cartoon freshness which will always add a laugh to the proceedings. If anyone has ever seen Day Of The Tentacle on PC, it's the same style and it works well.

We only managed to play through two levels on this preview version and the setting traps function was not working, but the computer certainly set enough for us, and this in turn inspired thoughts of dire revenge – so the incentive to play the game is certainly there.

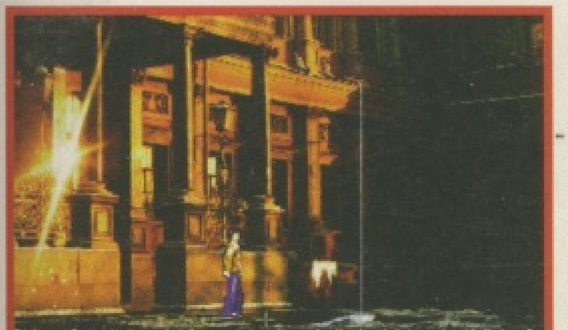
Minor criticisms, which I hope will be ironed out by the time the game is finished are: a) it seems a bit slow, the action could be a bit more frantic and b) because of the way the slanty doors are designed it is sometimes difficult to judge going through them: miss the right point and you're stuck. Not the sort of situation you want in an emergency. If these are rectified Flair could have a winner on their hands. ■

Martin Davies

Dominions



■ DFR: TBA ■ Publisher: Intersect Development



CU Amiga Magazine readers will already be familiar with Intersect Development (We previewed their shoot em up Atrophy in the April issue). We spoke, once again, to Frank Tout recently to find out more about the latest game that they've been working on – Dominions.

Basically, Dominions is one of a series of three games that centres around a main character called Gary Sommerton. In the main game you will encounter many crazy puzzles and a variety of different locations, enough to keep even the most ardent of players enthused. I'm told the objective of Dominions is to find the Chthonion. (Cath-own-ee-on) destroy him, so that you can rescue the young girl who was taken from her world for the pleasure of the Chthonion.

Frank described the plot in better detail.

"Our character has been pulled to an underworld by a demon who is not as nasty as the other demons. And it is with this demon's original help that an amulet can be found thus helping to win the battle and rescue the girl"

So will Dominions have that essential coming back to play again factor, like so many of the LucasArts and Delphine games?

"Oh yes, most definitely. The game should have an eerie feel about it, a sense of dread and terror, after the first section, our player is transported into an under world, where demons and devils abound. It is not Monkey Island III, but a very serious game, so we want you to let your creative juices flow and know no bounds"

Intersect Development seem to have some great ideas set-up for continued new development on the Amiga. They have been fine-tuning their unique game engine for several years but are now confident that there is still a substantial user-base out there that wants Amiga software.

Dominions is a long way off. However, it looks good even at this early stage (though the quality of the spite is slightly incongruous with the background) . Also, the graphics are accompanied by suitably effective classical music.

Let's hope we do see a full version and it would be nice to see Atrophy too! ■

Mark Forbes

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Valhalla

and the Fortress of Eve



■ Price: £17.99 ■ Publisher: Vulcan Software © 01705 670269

The king is back and this time he's got a cool new look to help him in his quest for a wife.





▲ Yes you can actually differentiate the doors from the floor in this version of Valhalla thanks to the funky new viewing perspective.

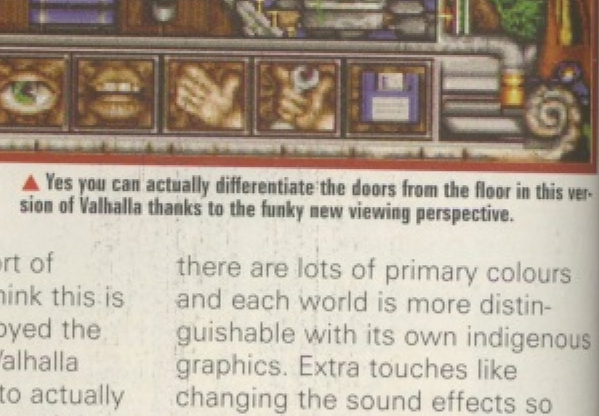
Hormones and a woman's biological clock have a lot to answer for. The crusty old evil Queen Eve, obviously fed up with her own aging libido, is determined to deny the young virile King any chance of happiness. She's locked up all the eligible young ladies to prevent him finding a wife. This is too much for our young hero to bear as anyone who has played the previous two versions of the Valhalla series will surely agree. Hasn't the poor lad been through enough in his quest to rule his father's kingdom? Now he's finally got there shouldn't he have the right to settle down and make some little Valhalla babies? Queen Eve doesn't think so, she's out to make it as difficult as possible for the boy to get his oats. He's got four treacherous worlds to complete before he even gets within earshot of an attractive woman.

Before the cynics amongst you start muttering "stop dressing it up dear, we know what to expect – same old hackneyed game with a bit of a different plot behind it" – I must tell you you're wrong. Though, I would have forgiven Vulcan if they decided with to stick with a format that has already brought them great success (if you read some other magazine's reviews you wouldn't believe this though). For the third installment in the Valhalla series, Vulcan, in my opinion, have changed the certajn aspects of the game radically – all to the benefit of the gameplay.

Cosmetics

The first thing you'll notice as you load the game is that the viewing perspective has changed from a top down one to a more sort of isometric type view. I think this is a Godsend. While I enjoyed the earlier versions of the Valhalla series it was very hard to actually find anything as objects and the Prince seemed to blur into one, leaving you trying to decipher where anything was. With the new perspective you see a complete version of the hero, instead of the previous upturned pancake-like version. Objects and people are also easier to find. In particular, doorways are easier to distinguish. No more having to search for a minuscule marking on a square, they are now clearly marked out.

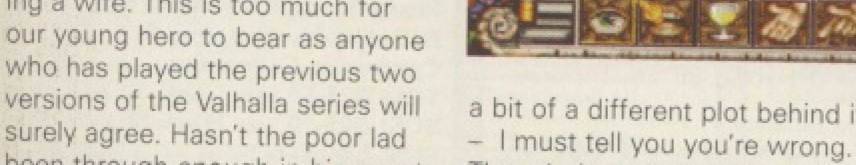
Another greatly appreciated cosmetic change is that each level is now more colourful than earlier versions. Vulcan seem to have waved goodbye to the awful boring brown-dominated colour palette of the two previous Valhalla games. They've injected a lot more colour to this version. Now there are lots of primary colours and each world is more distinguishable with its own indigenous graphics. Extra touches like changing the sound effects so that you can differentiate when the king is walking on different surfaces such as grass are also nice. There are also background noises that you can either turn on or off for each level. These are here, I presume, to add some atmosphere to each world and vary from birds twittering away for the woodland scene (though it did sound very similar to the background music for Vulcan's business simulator, Hillsea Lido) to



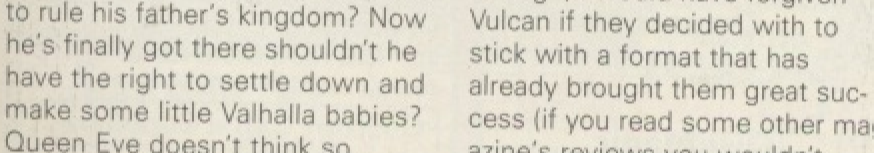
▲ In the later levels there are a lot of your spooky ancestors blocking your path. You need to find out a bit about each one to get rid of them.

Something old, something new

Can you spot the new icons? The top strip are the icons you get when you click on an item in your rucksack



Read | Eat | Drink | Place | Insert | Parents' ghost



Restart (Naa) | (Er) Load | (Ah) save | Text on or off | Speech gauge | Atmos tracks

Right back at ya!

Vulcan seemed to have taken any criticisms levelled at the two previous versions of Valhalla to heart and come back with a revamped playing area. And here it is.



Notice the new viewing perspective and colourful graphics. We've also got a full view of our hero now as well. The strip of objects at the top is your rucksack. Click on any one of these objects and you'll call up a new set of icons shown in the box on the left hand page. The rest is pretty much the same, stamina and potions bars at either side of you and the familiar row of icons at the bottom.

scaryish organ-type music for the later levels.

Some of you might also be glad to know that there is an option to limit the King's dulcet tones. You can choose to turn the volume down and read the text explanations alone or you can click on the speech icon to limit the amount that the cheeky chappie says. While the option to limit how much he speaks may sound very appealing to these who can't stand to the whiny "I 've got it" every five minutes, I found that you can miss out on vital clues if you pick this option. For instance in the first level, there is a chest surrounded by levers which if you try to operate will eventually kill you because you don't have the necessary potion before you can approach them. With the limited speech on you don't get to hear him saying "ouch that's hot". This message doesn't come up as text so it means that you miss out on the clue as to what potion you'll need in order to operate the levers. I think if the voice annoys you that much, turn the volume down on your Amiga, that way you won't miss out on any extra hints that are vital to getting on in the game.



▲ Top: when you do finally get to meet women you've got to get past the crusty old chaperones first before you can speak to them. (Above) The King informs us that it's a bug case. Hmm what to do next?

Gameplay

OK tarting up the game's appearance is all very well but has the game itself changed much? Well, the essential elements are still there. It's still a walkthrough adventure where you have to solve puzzles in order to get through each level. The puzzles, though not dramatically different, seem a little harder, but it's still a case of find key, insert in chest to find some other potion or object that you need in order to progress. The puzzle solving element is still as strong as ever. However, the cosmetic changes made to the game make it different enough to make it, in my opinion, more enjoyable than its two earlier incarnations.

Word association and good general knowledge skills are required for this game. There's also a lot more characters in this version who have a bigger part to play. You get to try out your schmoozing skills with characters such as the milkmaid who'll give you some milk if you tell her she's beautiful (works every time). I also found movement within the game much easier thanks to the new mouse-driven controls.

Slow death

It doesn't seem to be as easy to die in Eve. There's no more instant death if you fall down a hole in the game. The only way to die is if you run out of stamina, or if you undertake to do something tricky like try to stand next to something like a bee-hive for too long without taking the relevant potion.

Yes the potions are still here, only this time you've got an extra helping hand in the shape of the ghost of your parents. There's actually a new ghost icon which is your parents' ghost, if you have a potion in your rucksack click on this and they'll tell you what it's for. There's also the option to load from the last saved version which saves on the frustration factor of having to trog through a level that you've already half way through. Though perhaps it



▲ Top left: the map icon allows you to get to know your bearings. You're the little red sprite.

would have been better to have introduced a save option like the one in Timekeepers where you had more than one point where you could restart from. This would help in a case where you'd made a mistake but saved it at that point otherwise you've no option but to begin all over again. ·

A job well done

I think a pat on the back is in order for Vulcan Software. They could have rested on their laurels and stuck with a formula that seems to work judging by the amount of Valhalla fans there are. Instead they've improved an already good game and made it into a very enjoyable game. OK I don't think that Valhalla is ready to compete against the likes of Beneath a Steel Sky but I don't think that it's trying to and the price of £17.99 reflects this.

The graphics have been improved within the constraints of a game written in Amos will allow. Whilst I wasn't a diehard fan of the earlier two versions of this genre I really enjoyed playing this one. The puzzle solving can become a bit tiring and repetitive after a while but there's still enough enjoyment there to last a few weeks at least. Needless to say fans of Valhalla will adore this latest version. Previous detractors, are advised to take a look, it might change your opinion. ■

Lisa Collins

VALHALLA III

A500	workbench version ....1.3 up
A500+	number of disks 6
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A600	graphics 70%
A1200	sound 70%
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A1500	playability 90%
A2000	OVERALL
A3000	Much improved version of a great classic. **88%**
A4000	

Tin Toy

IN the House of Fun Adventure

■ Price: £14.99 ■ Developer/Publisher: Mutation Software ✆ 01705 672616

Danger!

The following is a quick selection of dangerous objects and enemies for your delectation.



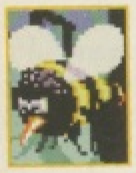
PEARS
They may be tasty in real life but in a game like this they are more likely to sting you for some life.



SYCAMORE SEEDS
Difficult to spot, but these parachuting devils can become a real pain in the bonce.



SPIKES
It's obvious really, but if Tin Toy falls on spikes like this he will lose some life.



WASPS
Nasty things at the best of times, the only solution for these insects in a couple of lethal stars.



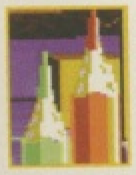
TINS OF BEANS
Flinging beans of doom at regular intervals, you've got to get in close to polish these off.



FRANKFURTERS
Revenge of the sausage! In a cruel twist of fate, these smoked demons fling forks at you.



HELICOPTERS
Difficult to shoot down, hitting the rotors will cause instant pain and possible loss of life.



PENCILS
What could be less threatening than a pencil? Wrong! They're sharp and dangerous.



A BURGER
This boss from the end of the second level emits bouncing pieces of onion for your discomfort.

Tin Toy might sound like an unlikely name for a platform adventure hero, but here he is ...

Man alive! Do you know what you've done Mr Adrian Cummings of Mutation Software? You've made an old games reviewer happy that's what. Here was I thinking 'not another cheap game from hell' when Lisa handed me the disks and a deadline. I left it until last thing that day, thinking that I would take a look at it just before going home – it wouldn't need much time before writing off. How wrong I was: three hours later I went home, shocked, stunned and happy.

The hackneyed reviewing word 'gem' is what I would most happily use to describe Tin Toy. Here's a game selling mail order, direct from the programmer that is well worth its £14.99 and probably more. Two years ago a major publisher would have taken this game on, tweaked it here and there (if they were worth their salt) and released it as full price punter bait. And it would have sold too, in droves. Which is what I hope it does now.





But enough adulation, what's it all about? Well the plot contains all the usual platform fodder; evil madman (in this case a clown); good guys lured to the dark side by said evil-bent circus japester (in this case tomatoes, pears, sausages, toy helicopters, pencils – you name it in the house and garden stakes), and end of level bosses themed to their level: the garden has a spider and the kitchen has a massive burger (both seem to have been infected with mad cow disease).







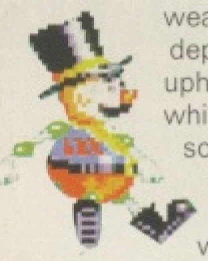
House of fun

The adventure takes place in and around a house, hence the rather strange objects. You start off in the garden and then progress through the kitchen, the playroom and so on. The objects on each level are thus themed. The garden has its fruit, wasps, flowers and trees, the kitchen has its gas rings, its beans, its tomato ketchup and its veg and the playroom has pencils, toy dragons and choppers.

Score is built up by collecting the score bonus stars scattered liberally throughout the screens, by shooting and killing all enemies and by discovering hidden sub levels littered with both. You can also pick up weapon power ups, spells (see separate boxout), health

Magic Objects and weapons

As well as a star gun (or something – it's not clear where this weapon emanates from) Tin Toy has a little store of magic weapons to aid him on his journey. These can be replenished by picking up symbols along the way. A large collection of these spells will enable our ferrous friend to beat end of level bosses and cover vicious sausage and deadly canned beans populated territories with more ease.



The star gun

Being a toy Iron Alec here is naturally equipped with a star gun, as all toys are (don't you know anything?). It's a lobbing weapon of sorts and thus aim has to be judged carefully. It can be powered up to a big star weapon if you're lucky enough to pick up an icon marked P. It has unlimited shots too, which is just as well because I had unlimited misses.



Fat Floater

This 'Floating Toy' power-up inflates Mettalic Mickey to gigantic proportions, enabling him to pull Richard Branson-like balloon stunts, flying over difficult terrain or capturing out of reach score bonuses and magic symbols. Like Mr Branson he doesn't tend to stay up for long though.



Top Hat Travel

Releasing your top hat to run amok has two advantages. Firstly Tiny Tin can jump onto this oversized Barnet garment which then will carry him smiling along to the right of the screen until it runs out of power. Secondly it will polish off the clown's evil spawn should they get in the way.



Whirlwind Taz impression

Being a toy the tin one obviously doesn't have to worry about getting dizzy, which is handy because this spinning weapon can be well hard against superior numbers of the enemy and is especially useful for polishing off end of level baddies. If he injures himself it stops though.



Not so smart weapon

A true magic weapon this: triggering it sends a quintet of rabbits up into the air, escaping from Tin Toy's hat. These will damage the enemy. The problem is that even though called 'Smart', it's not really. Unless I'm blind or something. Like all magic spells it takes time to cast and if the enemy hits you while you're charging up, you lose the spell.



replenishment (in the shape of little cans of oil) and life bonuses. There is a power bar at the top of the screen and it only takes four or five contacts with the enemy to lose a life, so if you're not careful and you don't pick up all your bonuses the game will end quickly. In the options menu at the beginning you can increase the amount of lives at your disposal and you can also increase the amount of spells you start off with. The standard for the former is three lives, increasable to five, while you can start off with up to three of each spell.



Difficulties

There are some problems with the game though. I feel that Mutation has been just a little too liberal with its killing regime. Jumping can sometimes be a leap of faith and some bits become just a bit too frustrating because of this. Also the main weapon shoots in different ways depending on where you are; uphill, downhill etc, which means that some targets are frustratingly difficult to hit without back-tracking or running all over the gaff. Another weapon problem is that the spells take time to conjure up and if an enemy hits you during this process the spell stops forming. This isn't too bad in itself, but you also lose the spell, diminishing the amount you have. This is annoying. Finally on the complaints front, and I've had this complaint about many platformers before, when you get killed you go straight back to the beginning of the level again, no matter how far on you are: and there is no facility to go back to a later level using codes or saves either.



But overall the execution is simply excellent for a new £14.99 game. Reading the press bumf (which I only did after playing the game for some time) I found out that the developer had previously done work for the likes of Core Design, and this experience shows. The overall feel is very, very professional. Mutation has managed to treat an essentially silly subject in such a way that it will appeal to games fans of all ages. Look how stupid the ideas of a hedgehog or a plumber are: but yet Sonic and Mario are major brand names. Tin Toy isn't quite in this league yet: it lacks a truly great feel, but if Adrian Cummings continues its development I'm very much looking forward to Tin Toy 2. Keep 'em coming. ■

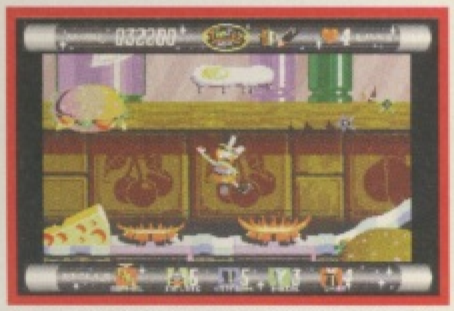
Alan Dykes



▲ The kitchen is certainly my favourite level. I play it before lunch. This bag of crisps has got to die ...



▲ A life power up on the left, a friendly dragon fly on the right. Dragon flies will carry you over spikes in the first garden levels.



▲ Out of the fried egg into the fire, as it were. Fried eggs are very slippery, like the real thing.



▲ The flowers are actually moving platforms. Picking up that oil can will replenish Tin Toy's life force.

Where to get it from

In common with last month's XP8, Tin Toy is from a small company who do not distribute through shop channels. If you want to get hold of it here is the address and phone number:

Mutation Software
15 Burcote Drive
Anchorage park
Portsmouth
Hampshire
PO3 5UD
Tel: 01705 672616

TIN TOY

A500 / A500+	■ workbench version.........3.0+ ■ number of disks ....2 ■ RAM.................................2Mb ■ hard disk installable ......no
A1200	graphics........................ 86% sound........................... 80% lastability...................... 86% playability...................... 82%
A4000	OVERALL My game of the month. I'm charmed by it. **84%**

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Comparative MIPS performance figures measured using SysInfo. Each board has the appropriate SIMM fitted (required to activate accelerator)

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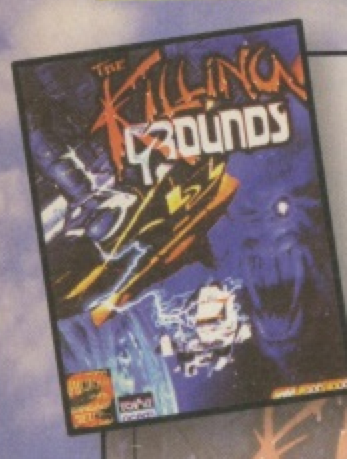
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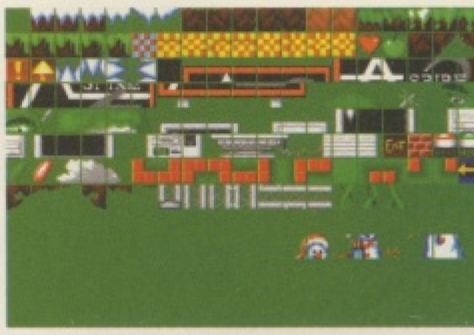


▲ The main screen nicely laid out with each of the editors.

If the mountain won't come to Mohammed ... In these trying times when new Amiga releases are thin on the ground, we've seen, rightly so, a sudden increase of new products around that are specifically designed to help you create your own games. We've previewed, this issue, one such product from BPM Promotions which promises the chance to design a whole host of games from a straightforward RPG to an all guns blazing shoot 'em up. Aspire, however, are taking a more focused approach and have released a game engine specifically for the platform genre.

Bright ideas

How many times have you awoken in the middle of the night with a great idea for a film/book/play but don't have a clue about how to put it into action? One of the most common questions that we're asked at CU Amiga Magazine is "I have an idea for a game but I don't have a clue about programming so what how do I go about creating it?" Well your prayers have been answered because Game Engine is the idiot's guide to game creation.


▲ Here's a choice of object that you can put down in the map editor to give it a bit of style.

By idiot's guide I mean that it has been laid out in a very easy to follow way. You start off in a very modular fashion and progress through each of the clearly defined editors: object, map, background, animation, and construction. The object editor is where you can create your sprites and any sundries that you'd like to put into your game. The map editor allows you to define the overall look of your game and where each platform will be. The background editor is obviously where you change and alter the background for various stages of the game: ie a nice bright intro screen and a dark doom and gloomy end screen. The animation editor enables you to dictate your objects' movement. Finally, the construction editor is your last port of call where it all must gel together and you can also add extra twiddly bits like a cheat mode and special sound effects.



▲ To alter the colour on any background in the Background Editor just move the bars and values until you find one that you like.

Good game

I enjoyed having the chance to have a bash at my making own game but found that although the menus under each editor are self explanatory the manual could have elaborated a bit more on each function within an editor. It was more a case of trial and error using the supplied demo. Not supplying instructions on how to install to hard drive also might put some novices off. In all, I think it's a great idea. Anyone wanting to develop games should definitely take a look. Could have been cheaper perhaps and better documentated but still a good effort. ■

Lisa Collins


▲ In the beginning there was a few apples and a pointy thing. Remember little acorns grow into big trees.

GAME ENGINE 1.1

A500 A500+ A600 A1200 A1500 A2000 A3000 A4000

system requirements:
AGA Amiga.

ease of use 88%
Easy to follow modular system. The manual could have more information though.

performance 70%
Generally OK, though sometimes strange messages appear like "x missing don't worry I'll sort it!'

value for money 70%
I think it is a great idea, though perhaps could have been a bit cheaper.

OVERALL
Brilliant idea, great for any one wanting to create a game.

72%



Adventure Helpline

Beauty is only skin deep but who cares? What are you looking for – a pretty kidney? Anyway, whatever you are looking for, Vamp's got it – in spades that's for sure!

Amberstar

What relevance does the dwarf, called Donner, who lives in a cave across from Gemstone have? And what's the password to get into the Doras Mine?

John Marshall, Victoria.

The little chappie is Bothor's uncle, you'll need him to get the password for the entrance to the Doras mine. First, go south of the Inn and talk to Bothor. Say 'Amberstar' to him and he'll give you a letter for his uncle Donner. Take the letter to Donner who is working a mine in the south of the island. The entrance is directly west of the jetty which itself is west of Gemstone. Cross the river to find the cave entrance.

Next, at the 'Doras Mine' go to the Puzzlemouth and say 'Sarod'. You get this password from Bothor after Donner's letter is delivered.

Valhalla - Lord of Infinity

Help, I'm completely stuck. How do I light the candle which I have found and what do I do with the small rock?

Jan Slavinski, Swansea.

There is a candle to be found inside one of the chests and if this is the one you mean, then you must take it to the room where you need to cross a chasm to get to the doorway. First, put the unlit candle on the fire stone to light it. The skull will ask you for the password. Pick up the lit candle and go to the chasm room. The small rock is found on a stool and you must take it to another stool.

You'll find this second stool inside a room where you use a stick in a hole to open the door. Putting the rock on this stool will let you access yet another room where the guardian with the yellow eyes is lurking. Which I must say sounds like a good idea doesn't it?

KGB

I am writing to beg for help with Virgin's KGB. I have been stuck for ages, as I cannot escape from Verto's apartment.

I have escaped from the stuffy room and killed Rita. I've seen Verto's snuff movie and photographed the blank piece of paper revealing the secret code. However, every time I attempt to leave the apartment I get shot by Verto, either coming up the stair or in the flat. How do I get out?

Jonathan Mills, Leeds.

What we need here is the classic, 'hide behind the door' trick. When Verto enters attack him and beat the living smorsk out of him. (Or whatever it is that Ruskies are made of.) Examine him and take the blue bit of paper. Use the camera on it, then return the paper.

Kings Quest II and V

I have been struggling with Kings Quest II and Kings Quest V for some weeks now, so could you please help?

In KQII, can you tell me where to find the sword, and in KQV can you tell me how to trap the witch in the brass bottle as she beats me every time and turns Graham into a frog.

E. O Roberts, Clwyd.

Have you ever heard of the Lady with the Lamp? No, I don't mean that wet nurse who went around sticking her torch up soldier's pajama legs, I'm talking about the lady in the shop who'll give you a magic lamp if you return her cage bird which Hagatha the witch stole. Rub the magic lamp three times to make all of your wishes come true, ie to get a sword.

Also, it's been a long time since I paid a visit to KQII, but if my memory serves me right you must not cross the rickety bridge more than you have to, or it will collapse and you will have no option but to play the whole game from the beginning again.

Before you go near the witch in KQV you must have the brass bottle, the honeycomb, and be wearing the amulet which you get from Madame Mushka in the gypsy caravan. You'll have to cross the gypsy's palm with gold before he will let you enter.

Monkey Island II

Please help me with the Secret of Monkey Island II. I need clues on how to get 'Something of the Thread'. I think it's something to do with Largo's hotel room door. Please help I've been stuck on this bit for months.

Paul Donohoe, Northwood.

'Threads' is of course the olde pirate word for clothes and if you watched plenty of Starsky and Hutch in the 70s then you would have heard it bandied about a bit. The trick here is to get the shirt off Largo's back. To do this balance a bucket of mud on his cabin door so when he returns he'll get plastered. This will force him to take his shirt to the laundry two months earlier than he normally would. He will leave his laundry ticket pinned to the back of his cabin door, so now you know where to go and get it.

Future Wars

I've gotten into the office on the right, by climbing through the window but I can't get past the boss.

I realise that you must think of me as the worst computer gamer on Earth, which may be true, but I've never resorted to writing to a magazine for help before.

Adrian Newman, Bridport.

Well why go and spoil your record when the answer is so easy? As you haven't told me anything else you have done, I suppose I'll have to give you step by step instructions for the first few moves.

Examine the waste basket and get the plastic bag. Go to the bathroom, open the medicine cabinet and take the insecticide. Open the toilet door and examine the floor to get a small flag. Use the bucket on the sink to fill it with water, then go to the north door in the office. Use the bucket on the door to balance it on top. Operate the east door and this will bring the boss in through the north door where he will get the bucket on his head. From here on in you're free of him. ■

If you've got a little problem with your favourite Role Playing Game and would like Vamp to help you out, drop her a line at CU Amiga Magazine, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.



FINAL THOUGHT: REMEMBER BOYS, 'BEAUTY IS IN THE EYE OF THE BEER HOLDER'.

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Snip tips



Come on! You know the drill by now – you supply the cheats, we print 'em, you get the free Hit Squad software. Need we say more? Except thanks for all those we received so far and make sure you keep 'em coming.

WORMS

Team 17

Loads of interesting level names for you to muck around with. I can't really attribute these to any one reader as this list is from about a hundred different sources. Thanks to you all.

WORMS	**RUSHMORE**
OCEAN	**OASIS**
TEAM 17	**TOMATO**
POSTMAN	**TRACKING**
CARROT	**631137362**
MONDAY	**ZZZZZZZZZZ**
QWERTY	**DOUGHNUT**
TRACTOR	**0010110010**
365740451	**WORM**
257544805	**DOOFUS**

Just in case you didn't already know, by typing in the number 1471 (BT fans will recognise those digits) as your level name you get to repeat the same level you've just finished. This is good if you like a particular level but forgot to make a note of the identity.

SLAMTILT

21st Century

Thanks to Dave Minns of Hull for this comprehensive list of cheat codes.

LONGPLAY: Five balls instead of three

RADIOACTIVE: Very funny and strange table colours

STONED: You'll get a, er ... interestingly warped ball.

ARCADE ACTION: Play the arcade actions

SMILE: Smiling ball (eh?)

WIPEOUT: Clears the high-score table. Finally, for a number of text messages, try these names:

BARRY
KLAUS
COW
KOTTEN
CHEAT
LIQUID
DANIEL
STEWART
IAIN
WHIPLASH



▲ We've got codes as long as your arm for 21st Century's ball popping Slamtilt.

SENSIBLE WORLD OF SOCCER

Warner Interactive

I suppose I should have known that I was asking for trouble suggesting that people sent in their top ten strikers lists! Anyway, it's all ended up as a random list out of a hat affair, so here's Phil Alcock of Blackpool's all time favourites:

1. **Romario - Barcelona**
2. **Roberto Baggio - Juventus**
3. **Stichkov - Barcelona**
4. **Shearer - Blackburn Rovers**
5. **Yeboah - Eintre Frankfurt**
6. **Ian Wright - Arsenal**
7. **Tony Cotte - West Ham**
8. **Juninho - Sauo Paulo**
9. **Bergkamp - Inter Milan**
10. **Weah - Paris St Germain**

BREATHLESS

Power Computing

And that crazy Scot, 'Bart' strikes again, with a couple of world codes that access full credits (99999), full energy (9999), full health, full shields and nine retries.

WORLD 2:
181A59MBTR63F8PD
WORLD 3:
181A59LBTR63F8PT
WORLD 4:
181A59KBTR63F8SD

ALIEN BREED 3D

Team 17

Chris Jones from Gloucester would like to inform us that by following the first eight letters of your level code with eight 'J's you receive full ammo for every weapon except the shotgun. For example, level one would now be entered as KLLKFFFFJJJJJJJJ. This means that you'll start the level with maximum Pulse Rifle, Plasma Gun, Grenade Launcher and Rocket Launcher (well, providing you've already collected them, that is). Also, if you have difficulty getting past certain levels, go into Workbench and rename the levels 'Level_1', 'Level_2' etc. The only problem with doing this is that you'll miss some of the game's story but you can always make levels one to four just copies of level one. This way you'll get the full story progression just by playing through level 1 over and over! Boring I know, but hell, it's a cheat isn't it?

ALIEN BREED (A1200 & CD32)

Team 17

More Alien Breedular shenanigans ahoy, with this codes lists that delivers the player full energy, all weapons available and full ammunition. Cheers to Scotland's very own Grahame 'Bart' Harrison.

LEVEL	CODE
2	KOKO FNKP FFKF FFKF
3	OKKO FHKP FFKF FFKF
4	KPKO FPKP FFKF FFKF
5	POKK NNKP FFKF FFKF
6	KKKO NHKP FFKF FFKF
7	PPKK NHKP FFKF FFKF
8	PPKK NPKP FFKF FFKF
9	LLKO HFKP FFKF FFKF
10	LOKO HNKP FFKF FFKF
11	PKKO HHKP FFKF FFKF
12	LPKO HPKP FFKF FFKF
13	OLKO PFKP FFKF FFKF
14	OOKO PNKP FFKF FFKF
15	LKKO PHKP FFKF FFKF
16	OPKO PPKP FFKF FFKF

■ **Matt Broughton**

And that's your lot! Don't forget to keep 'em coming in and thanks to those groovy funksters at Ocean there's a Hit Squad game for every tip printed. Ta-ra!

PLAY IT AGAIN SAM

This isn't a specific cheat, as such – more a reply to numerous pleas from hapless Amiga owners wanting to know how you can import your own sound samples into Worms OK, to do this you need to first find yourself some replacement samples (try PD libraries) and then use the Workbench utility Multiview to examine the sample files on the Worms disks in the drawer called TWENGLISH (disk 2, Show All Files). Now rename YOUR files the same as the original Team 17 files and replace them. Two words of warning: 1. Use back-ups just in case you mess it up. 2. Make sure you only use files that can be used by Multiview.





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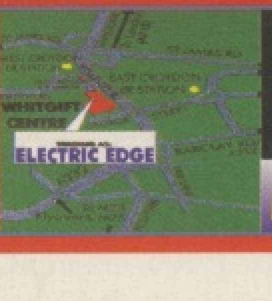
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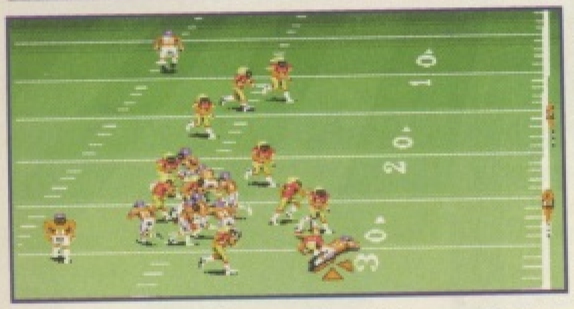
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Five games for under £30? You got it!

The Hit Squad has been supplying budget games now for about as long as anyone can remember which probably accounts for its current bout of senile dementia. As you can see from the headline The Hit Squad are offering five games for just £29 or, if you're feeling adventurous, ten games for £47.50. That's just £5.80 or £4.75 per game depending on which offer you choose. Hardly wallet busting, you might agree. But what's on offer? All of the following 15 games are available at the offer price (which, by the way, includes post and packaging):

Never look a gift horse on the mouth, as they used to say. Which is, of course, utter rubbish. Most people don't have anywhere to keep a horse these days but five Hit Squad games ... that's a different matter.

John Madden American Football



Now here is a title worthy of its accolades. Back in the heady days when Channel 4 first brought American Football to our TV screens we were all bemused by the massive, gruff and totally crass presenter that was (and still is) John Madden. He's the sort of chap you'd dread meeting on the London Underground dressed in blue slacks and a brown checked jacket asking the way to 'Glow-Sester Rowd' in frightening American drawl. But there's no doubt that the American Football game he penned his name to is in a league (or conference) of its own on Amiga. In fact it has been one of life's great tragedies that John Madden American Football never made it past this first version, but if you are a Gridiron fan then it really is unmissable.

A one or two player game, it contains enough combinations of offense*, defense* and special team play to keep you up all night and the tight programming conversion and graphics are a delight. If you like your football as close to reality as possible then get John Madden, you won't be disappointed.

(*No it's not a spelling error – it's an American game)

The Immortal

An isometric RPG with dungeons, demons and sorcerers, animated battles and complex puzzles. Collect coins weapons and potions and save your master – if you dare.

Kid Pix

Junior DPaint. If you want the young 'uns to have fun with art then this is the program you need. Complete with wacky sound effects, plenty of brushes, rubber stamp images and pictorial special effects.

Risky Woods

With very large sprites and a cacophony of enemies, power ups and difficult jumps Risky Woods harks back to the good old days of Amiga gaming when the platform was king.

Hard Nova

Combination RPG and shoot 'em up, Hard Nova involves taking on the role of a space adventurer trying to make a fortune and stay alive, interacting with their characters and fighting in a top-down view world.

Sleep Walker

An unusual game about a kid who sleepwalks and a dog who keeps him out of trouble. You play the dog and try to surmount obstacles before young Johnny comes a cropper. Involving gameplay and some funny moments.

Pushover

A puzzle game, Pushover works on the domino principle and involves an increasingly

F29 Retaliator



All those years ago (1992 to be precise) Digital Image Design or DID as they are best known showed the promise that was to eventually lead to TFX with F29 Retaliator. The game, based around two prototype next generation fighters, the F29 and the Northrop F25, veered away from pure flight simulation to a more arcade feel giving it a more involving gameplay. Superbly programmed and very fast for its day it has only one disadvantage: it will not work on an A1200 or A4000. But on A500, 500+ and 600 it is still one of the fastest and most playable flight sims available with plenty of mission variety and virtually no slow-down, regardless of the amount of action on screen.

Cannon Fodder



Happiness is a war game called Cannon Fodder. When first released in 1993 it caused a bit of a stir in the national newspapers after war veterans objected to its use of poppies and its willy nilly wasting of human life.

However, politics aside, we can tell you one thing: Cannon Fodder has never killed anybody, though not for want of trying. If it's possible to die of exhaustion in front of a computer screen then its just as well that Sensible limited the missions to 30, or it might have happened.

The premise (if you don't already know by now) is that you take squads of tiny troopers into enemy territory, guiding them with your mouse cursor, aiming their weapons with your mouse cursor and gripping the table edge with your other hand as enemy gun emplacements, bazookas and the like try to knock your lads out.

You get to guide the little fellas around in a jeep, a skidoo and a chopper too, on snow and in the jungle, which adds variety and laughs aplenty to the game. But it's the down to earth, very involving gameplay that impresses most of all.

complex set of ledges and platforms which have standing tiles on them. Your job is to place a key tile in the right place and set off a chain reaction which will flatten them all – against the clock of course.

Wizkid

Does anybody remember Wizball, Sensible's first big name game? Well Wizkid is the follow up. It combined the original's playability with next generation graphics and a more complex plot. A quirky little game which is great fun to play.

Supremacy

Not the board game – but a variation on the theme. Supremacy involves running the world, managing its resources and building up its military might against the threat of an alien menace.

Shuttle

As much an education as a game. If you've ever wondered how the American space shuttle works then this is as close to the real thing as you can get: basically a flight sim that goes out of this world – literally. All aspiring astronauts out there will love this one.

Budokan

Beat 'em up action from the Electronic Arts stable. Still one of the most comprehensive fighting games ever, Budokan involves you becoming a student of four Japanese martial arts disciplines: practicing them at first and then putting them into action.

Epic

The follow-up to Retaliator (see separate review) this time, however, DID send you into outer space on a mouse-controlled shooting festival that WILL work on A1200. Not as exciting as retaliator, but every bit as fast and with more SFX.

European Champions

A horizontally playing football game featuring all the top international teams, big player sprites and detailed animation and player moves.



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Get Serious

Photogenics 2.0 and AudioLab 16 head up another selection of no-nonsense reviews this month. Read on ...

Horgan's Organ



Not bad! I have to admit to being worried about Audiolab 16 and Photogenics: They have both been promised for several months now but in the current Amiga climate there was a chance that they could be further delayed – or even dropped. But it was thankfully not to be, so here they are in all their glory.

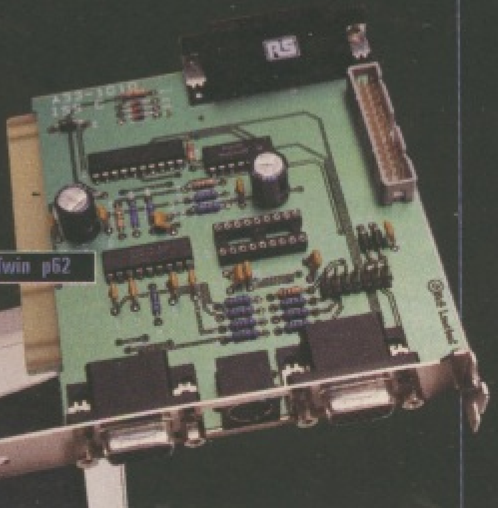
Mat had tremendous fun with the Siamese Twin this month. He's just bought a new PC (spit), "for research purposes only", and it has become the bane of his life. The chance to link it up to his Amiga and be able to get the best of both worlds was an opportunity not to be missed.

It's also nice to see the Amiga M1764 in for testing at last too. This monitor really does define the standard which all Amiga monitors should reach in terms of its clarity and flexibility, not to mention its size. Unfortunately it's a bit expensive, but for professionals it really is the best solution.

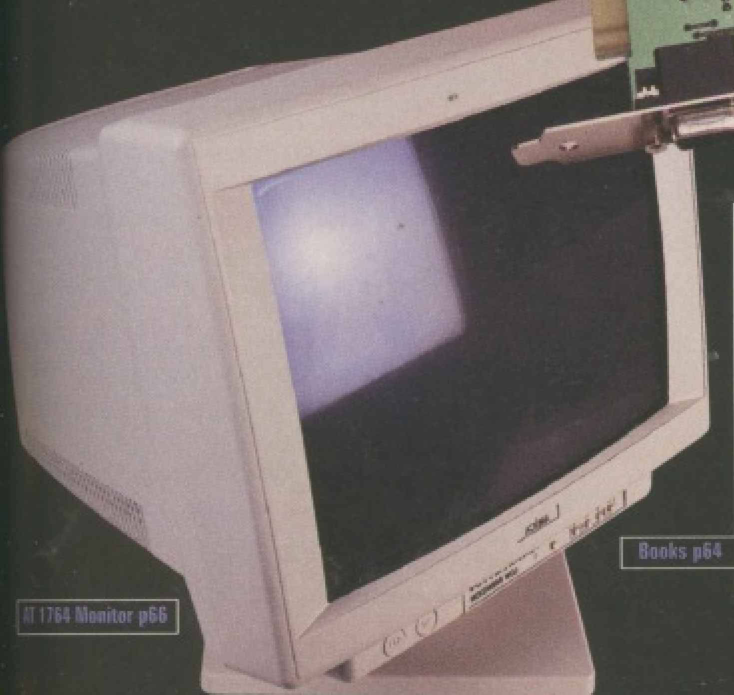
We've had a real CD festival this month which has resulted in CD-ROM Scene going up to three pages ... and we still had some left over! Among them is Aminet 12, with my very own sample collection on it ... and I didn't even know about it. Some cheeky so and so has been uploading my work again.

As usual PD Scene and PD Utilities are packed with reviews, too numerous to mention.

Tony Horgan
Technical Editor



Siamese Twin p62



M1764 Monitor p66



Books p64



Welcome to Photogenics

If you're one of the few that's missed out on the fun so far, let us briefly introduce you to Photogenics. It's a 24-bit graphics package but can't easily be compared directly with any other, mainly due it its combination of paint and image processing features and a unique window-based user interface. It normally runs on a HAM 8 screen to give slightly chunky but accurate previews of your images, of which you can have a number open on the same screen. Tooled up with plenty of load and save modules it's ideal for compatibility with various other graphics systems.

Photogenics

■ Price: £54.95 ■ Developer/Supplier: Almathera © 0181 687 0040

It was the new boy of Amiga graphics but now it's grown up. Can the new version of Photogenics live up the public's ever increasing demands?

On its initial release early in 1995 Photogenics gave the Amiga graphics scene a good slap round the face with a totally new approach to painting with pixels. For the record, it scored 91% in the February 1995 issue of CU Amiga and was described as a program that "lived up to all expectations". Since then one of its main rivals, Image FX, has soldiered on to version 2.6 and raised the stakes as reported in our exclusive review last month. Now it's time for Photogenics to hit back.

The main difference with the new version is that it's only available on CD-ROM. It comes in a neat little CD folder with no printed manual. This is replaced by an on-line help system that uses the Web browser AWeb to read pages from the CD. Those not yet equipped with a CD drive may feel hard done by, but you can't deny that it makes sense to distribute a single CD in place of a handful of disks.

Of course the advantage of using a CD is that there's plenty of room for support graphics and other software. From Almathera's point of view, the extra space also allows them to save money that would otherwise be spent on a printed manual.

Interface changes

Surprisingly some changes have been made to user interface. This was originally based around a collection of fairly standard windows, requesters, listers and the custom tool bar. Unfortunately certain parts of the program have now switched to using awkward and often extremely irritating alternatives. For example, the listers (such as the load and save options, the effects and the paint modes) are now contained in windows that at first look just like any other window. However, if you open them up and select an item straight away they disappear with your selection taking no effect.

Before you can make them do anything you need to toggle a little gadget that sits in the top left corner (yes, where the close gadget would normally be). Now you can make your selection. I can't see any advantages in this system. The old one worked fine. If you select a lister it's because you want to use it, so why should it have to be 'checked' first? In a way the situation is made worse by the fact that only some of the windows work like this.

Others have close gadgets in the top left corner as normal, so you have to be on your toes to remember which type you're using.

Special FX

Photogenics offers a wide range of special effects. These have now been separated into two different menus: Modes and Effects. The Modes are the ones you can use when you're drawing freehand (or using the drawing tools) on your image. Those in the Effects menu affect the entire image. Nearly all of them have parameters which can be altered from little sliders and a few also have previews, although this is currently the exception rather than the rule.

Some of the most notable



additions in this department include the Wave effect which distorts your image with a number of vertical and/or horizontal waves. The Hex effect works like a pixelise process but breaks the image down into hexagons rather than cubes. Not far from that one is the Pyramid effect which pixelises the picture before exploding the segments into little pyramids.

Many of the existing processes seem to have been updated or given extra options. However, Photogenics was well equipped in this area already and anyone expecting hundreds of new effects may be a little disappointed.



▲ While there's no lens flare generator, you do get a selection of rendered flares to add to your pictures.

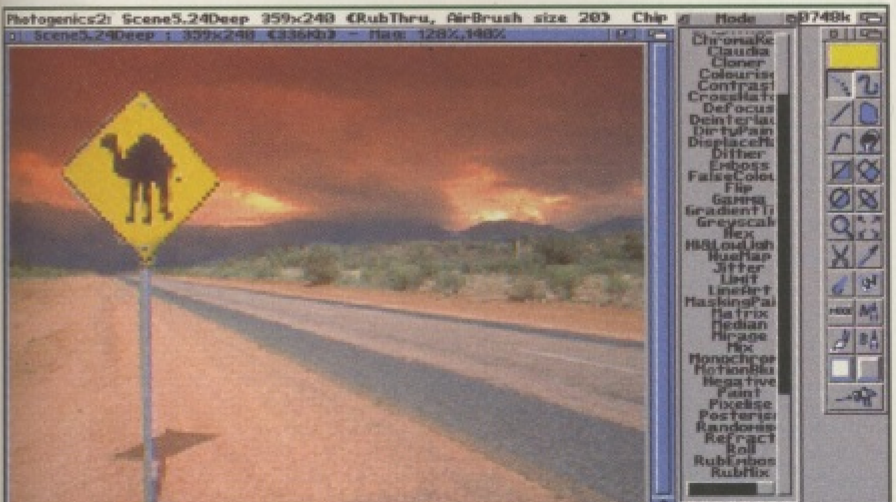
Virtual memory

There's now a very simple way of using virtual memory, which allows you to create pictures far exceeding your RAM capacity. By opening a 'virtual image' from the Project menu you can work on a scaled down preview whilst automatically rendering the changes to the real image file on your hard drive. Best of all no MMU is required for this. You might be wondering why you would want to create such large images, especially if you've only got a maximum of 2Mb Chip RAM for your display. There are actually plenty of uses for this, mostly for anyone who wants to create images to be displayed on larger systems or printed out and used as artwork.

Whether you use the virtual memory or not, you can also take advantage of the animation features. Anim 5 format animations can be loaded (one frame at a time) and likewise you can output Anim 5 files by processing each frame in turn and then saving them out to form a continuous file. If you're a wizard with ARexx you'll find you can automate all kinds of functions and achieve results that would otherwise be impossible. In fact this will be something of an adventure playground for anyone into both graphics and ARexx.

Classic styling

Just about everything that originally made Photogenics such a hit is still here too. It's unique in the way it handles images and lets you paint onto them with a range of real life-emulating brushes, such as the smooth airbrush, the water colour paint and the neon strip. It's ideal for making up compositions and montages from multiple images, helped along by the bank of thumbnails along the bottom of the screen representing each image. If you never quite understood how alpha channels worked this will make everything clear – just drag any picture into the alpha or secondary box and then choose your alpha or rub through function.



▲ Here's a simple example of the 'rub-through' function, replacing one sky with another.

Ins and outs

You can throw just about any type of image file at Photogenics and it will probably load it. Likewise it can save out in plenty of different formats. The 'loaders' list reads as follows: ACBM, Amiga screen (screen grabber), Anim, Be-Raw, BMP, CDXL, Framestore File, Framestore Grab, GIF, IFF Deep, ILBM, IMG, Impulse, JPEG, LightWave Object, Noise, Paint Layer, PBM, PCD, PCX, PNG, ProGrab 24RT, PsRaw, QRT, QuadAnim, Raw, Targa, Text, TIFF and VLab. The savers on offer (which include render modules) are: Amiga screen, Anim, Ascii-art, Be-Raw, BMP, CybergraphX, EGS, FrameStore Display, Framestore File, GIF, Ham6, Harlequin, HHsYUVSequence, IFF-24, IFFDeep, ILBM, JPEG, OpalVision, PBM, PCX, Picasso-II, PNG, PrefPrinter, QRT, Raw, Retina, Sculpt, ShowHAM6, ShowHAM8, StudioII Print, Targa, TIFF and Turbo Print.

Future additions

Excellent as it is, there are still a few things I'd like to see added to Photogenics. First of all it really needs a specific Render section. At the moment you can render any image to the screen via the Savers menu, which offers a few Amiga screen options and 24-bit display cards, but this is not ideal as you can't independently select the colour depth, resolution and screen mode.

Another welcome addition would be an extension of the cut-out tool to allow you to carve out complex objects from a background without having to draw a perfect outline in one hit with the mouse (which is virtually impossible).

As for the lack of a printed manual, I'm not convinced. While the AWeb instructions work well with both text and graphics used in some cases, I would still prefer to have a good ring-bound manual sitting next to the keyboard to get to the nitty gritty of some of the more complex and obscure features.

Conclusion

Despite the frustrations from the altered interface (which will be just as confusing for newcomers as it is for seasoned users) Photogenics 2 is without doubt a very classy bit of software. I wouldn't want it to be my sole graphics tool, but apart from work-a-day image viewing and file conversion, I must admit it has been one of the most often used tools on my system over the past 18 months and looks like it will continue to be for the near future. When it comes to freehand image manipulation there's nothing that comes close. ■

Tony Horgan



PHOTOGENICS

A500 | A500+ | A600 | A1200 | A1500 | A2000 | A3000 | A4000

system requirements: 4Mb RAM, hard drive, CD-ROM drive, Kickstart 3.0 or higher

ease of use 89%
Good once you know the system, but there are quirks in the interface.

performance 93%
Stunning images can be created with ease. Generally quite fast.

value for money 94%
A low price for a powerful bit of software, even if there's no printed manual.

OVERALL
A worthwhile successor to version 1.
92%

Audiolab 16 2.0

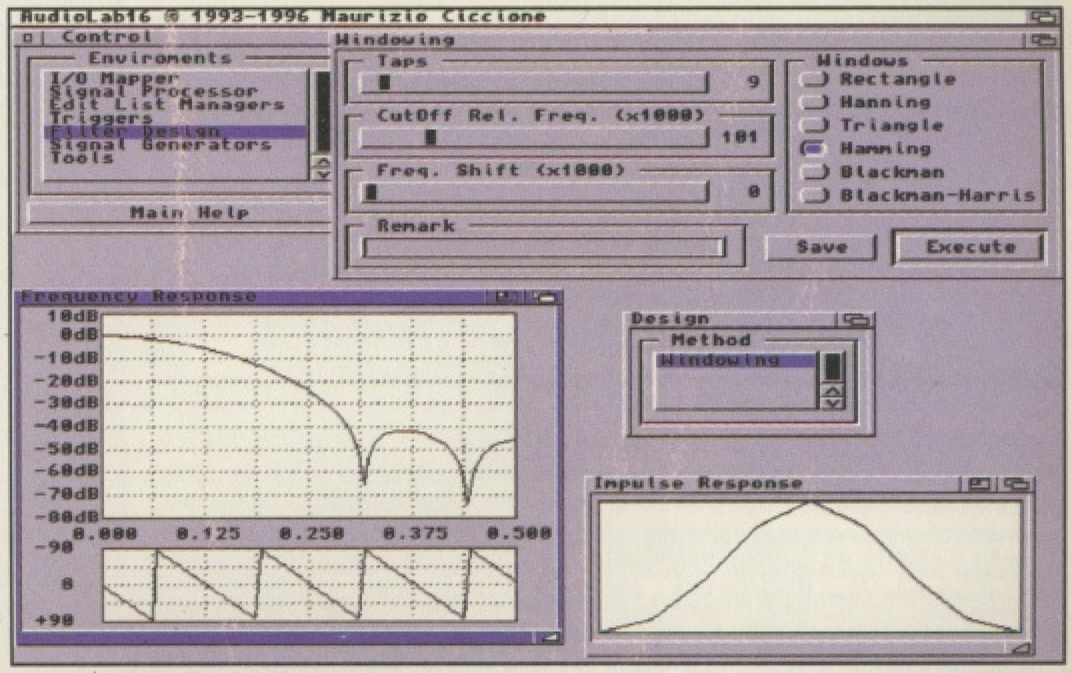
■ **Price: US$95** ■ **Developer/Supplier: Maurizio Ciccione**
E-mail: maurizio.ciccione@p7.f206.n332.z2.fidonet.org

Fancy yourself as a mix-meister? Well this could be the package for you ...

Many of you will have had your first introduction to AudioLab 16 via our April 96 cover CD, which included a very handy limited demo of the program. It would be nice to assume that you had all tinkered around with it already, then I wouldn't have to try to explain exactly what it does! You see it doesn't fit neatly into the traditional categories of music software – it would be wrong to describe it merely as a sample editor, and it's certainly not a tracker or a sequencer. It's really an all-round Amiga audio tool that fills in a lot of the gaps left by existing audio software.

AudioLab is the work of Maurizio Ciccione, one of the many programmers supporting the Amiga with top software via the shareware scene. This review refers to the fully registered version.

So I suppose you're probably wondering just what this program does. Some of its main features include a multi-track sample replay sequencer, direct loading and file conversion of audio data from conventional music CDs, a powerful digital signal processor for use with samples and a signal generator. First let's take a look at the DSP section.



▲ AudioLab's filter designer looks complex, and it is, but it's pretty easy to use.

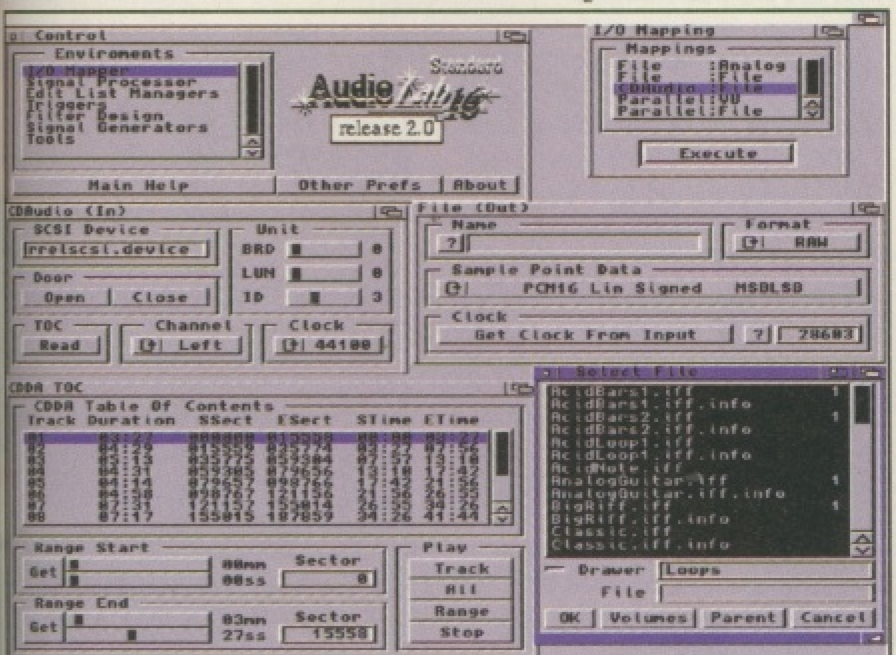
DSP effects

Although at first the digital signal processor section doesn't look like it's up to much it houses some useful tools and quality effects. You don't get a waveform display and the normal editing tools you might expect; instead you work on the entire sample, selecting an input file and an output file. You can also use the analogue output option for auditioning the processes in real time. The list of operators currently looks like this: amplitude control (volume fade in/out), clock converter (re-sampling), comb filter, distortion (overdrive), single tap delay, multi tap delay, recursive delay (delay with feedback), FIR filter, flanger, hum remover (50 or 60Hz), multiflanger, noise gate, phase inverter, pitch-shift, quantiser, room (reverb), skipper (duplicate or delete alternate samples), time inverter (reverse), time stretch and tone control.

Some of these are extremely useful and many are cannot be found elsewhere. The hum remover works extremely well too, taking out interference that can creep into a sample from the mains electricity. The noise gate is a quick and easy way of removing the gaps between peaks in a sample where background noise is often most apparent. For the more technically minded you can even design your own complex filter settings, aided by frequency response graphs.

Multitrack

One of the neatest features of the program is its multitrack 'sequencer'. This isn't like a conventional MIDI sequencer, but more of a multitrack cue-list for playing samples straight from a hard drive. Probably the best use for it would be in a multimedia or video project for adding soundtracks to visual presentations, although it's also likely to find



▲ Reading audio from music CDs is easily done with AudioLab 16.

Through the multiple window

AudioLab runs in a system of multiple windows. A minimum display of 640 x 400 pixels is recommended, which means if you can only use video display modes you'll have to make do with an interlaced screen or have your windows stacked up on top of one another on a non-laced screen. This does make things rather untidy. Running the program on a larger flicker-free Productivity mode or through a graphics board is far more comfortable on the eyes and allows you to have all the relevant windows laid out in their own space.

Continued overleaf ►►►

CD audio

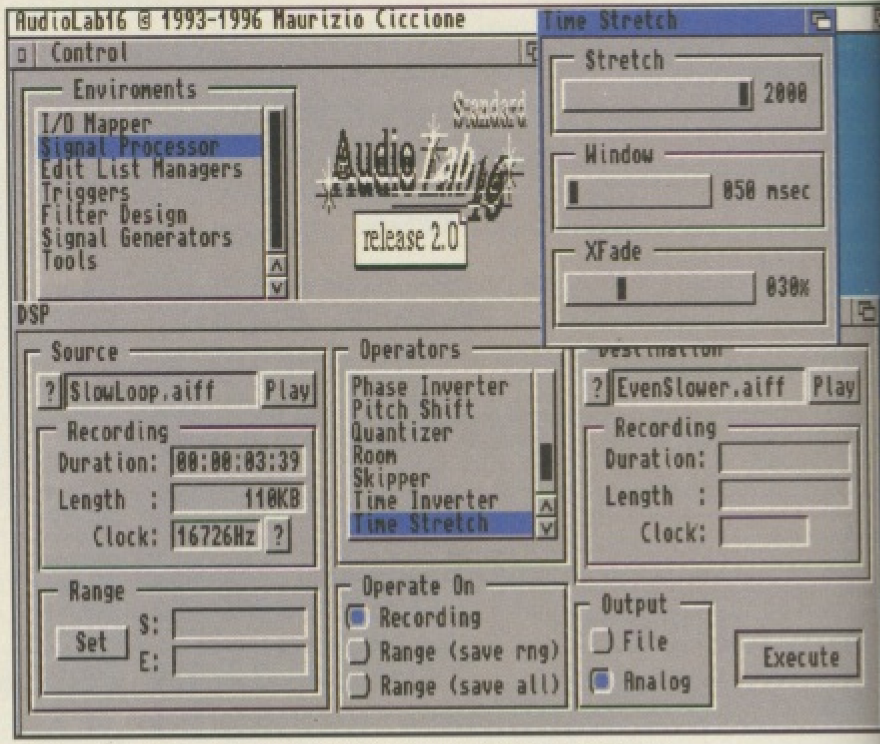
Another star attraction is the CD audio reader. Sound is stored on audio CDs as 16-bit samples recorded at 44.1kHz but these tracks can't just be copied of the CD using Workbench or the Shell. However, AudioLab can read audio CDs from certain CD-ROM drives. It can then save this data in a number of 16 and 8-bit sample formats, which you can load into your normal music or sampler software, or even back into AudioLab for further processing. The documentation lists the following drives as working in this way: Plextor Quad Speed PX-45CS, Pioneer DR-U124X, Sony CDU-561, Sony CDU-8002, Sony CDU-8003A, Sony CDU55S, Sony CDU76S, Matsushita CR-8004 and Nakamichi 7 disc changer. There are probably quite a few other compatible drives too. This also works with the ATAPI device driver (the SCSI device unit must be set to 1).

The best way of converting a specific part of a track is to home in roughly with the digital range finders (there's no waveform display yet) and then perform your precise edits within a separate sample editor. This is an excellent way to transfer samples to your Amiga, as there's no chance of any distortion or noise appearing along the way (unlike conventional sampling).

Future enhancements in this area include improved integration with Canadian developers ASIMWare's Asim CD File System, which should allow for graphic displays of CD audio tracks, performing DSP functions on CD audio and triggering of CD audio tracks via MIDI. We'll keep you posted.

How to order

The registered version of AudioLab 16 2.0 is only available direct from the author Marizio Ciccione, priced at US$95 or the equivalent of other currency. You can contact Maurizio at the following address: Maurizio Ciccione, v.p.Ciccione 9/6, Alassio, (SV) 17021, ITALY.
E-Mail: maurizio.ciccione@p7.206.n332.z2.fidonet.org.



▲ Time stretch is one of the many excellent sound processing effects available.

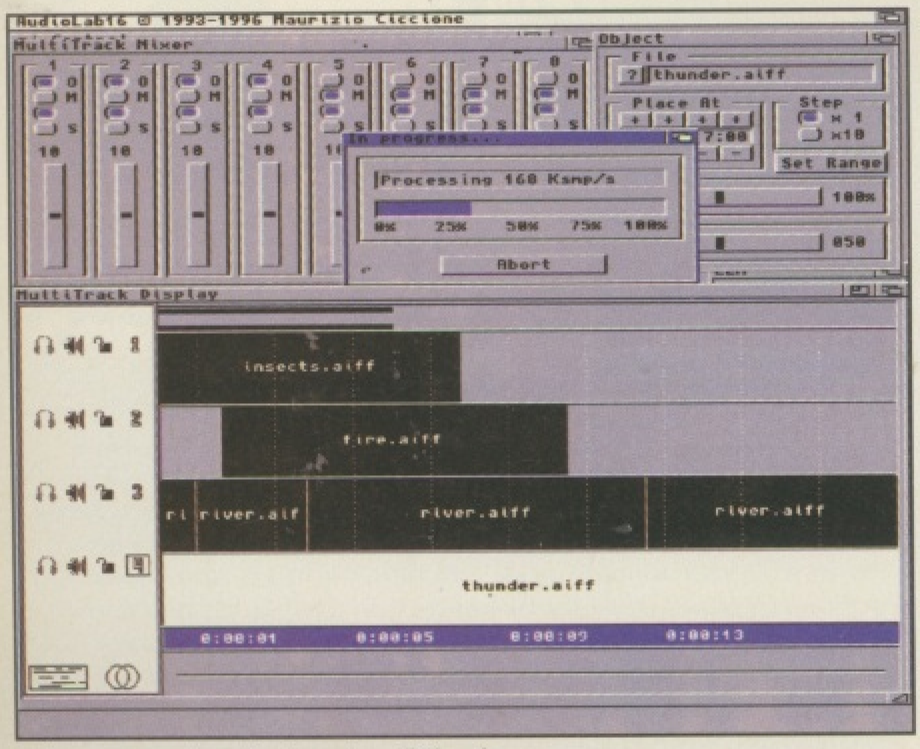
niches to fill in musical audio set-ups. Like the rest of the program the multitrack editor works in a number of windows that can be dragged around the screen and re-sized according to your needs and your chosen display mode. Setting up precise sequences is made easy with a combination of drag and drop controls and options for more accurate timing control. The intelligent internal processing lets you sequence a number of 16-bit samples and output them through the Amiga's stereo audio ports or through a Toccata card.

File types

In general AudioLab likes to work with 16-bit samples. Most sections will normally only import 16-bit samples (AIFF, MAUD and Maestro, plus Studio 16_3 format in the DSP section), although it will output in a variety of 16 and 8-bit formats (AIFF, MAUD, Maestro, WAV, SUN, Studio 16_3, VOC, IFF and RAW) each with a few variations. This means if you're using the program predominantly for 8 bit sample processing you'll have to convert your 8-bit sounds using the In/Out Mapper section.

Remote trigger

You can set up AudioLab to act as a slave device or task to be controlled via MIDI input, ARexx or the Amiga keyboard. In this mode you can tell AudioLab to play a specific sample from the hard drive by sending it an ARexx message (which, for example, could be contained in a script executed by a multimedia authoring package such as VideoStage), or you could hook it up to any MIDI device or sequencer and fire samples from that. Alternatively you could just cue the samples by hand from the keyboard.



▲ Here you can see the multitrack sample cue list in action.

Conclusion

AudioLab 16 is a very powerful program. It offers a wide range of features that you'd be hard pushed to find in any other software, and while it seems to lack a little in direction (perhaps an impression partly given by the free-form nature of its multiple sections and randomly-strewn windows) it will find fans in various quarters of the Amiga scene.

On one hand it's a great tool for multimedia and video producers looking for some good audio tools and an audio cue-list editor to complement the pictures. Then there's its sample conversion functions that offer a bridge between many different platforms, from outboard samplers to PCs and Macs.

Don't forget the CD audio-slurping features either. These alone make it a very useful tool for absolutely anyone who wants to take samples from audio CDs. I'm sure plenty of uses will also be found for the remote control features, whether that's spooling off large background samples as part of a MIDI sequencing set-up or replaying sounds as part of interactive multimedia presentations.

There's something for almost every user here and for that reason if you're serious about music you should check it out. ■

Tony Horgan

AUDIOLAB

A500 · A500+ · A600 · A1200 · A1500 · A2000 · A3000 · A4000

system requirements:
68020, Workbench 2, hard drive and 2Mb of RAM

ease of use 80%
Good once you've sorted out all of your windows on a good screen mode.

performance 88%
Some excellent features, many of which cannot be found elsewhere.

value for money 79%
Not a bad price considering the amount of professional features on offer.

OVERALL
A great tool for all kinds of audio jobs.
84

TEXTURE PORTFOLIO £27.99

A collection of textures has taken a staggering 5 years to complete. Phantasmagoria are a professional graphics company, based in Bristol. They have been providing textures and backgrounds for video, ray-tracing etc. This CD consists of 500+ 24Bit backgrounds and textures, it includes the very high quality 24Bit JPEG files for video, graphics and multimedia work, Targa's for PC raytracing and GIF format for video titling applications. The various sections include Abstract - Phantasmagoria, Abstract - Oil Paints, Abstract - Mixed, Animal Skins, Clouds, Fire, Food, Masonry, Rock, Metal (6 sub-sections), Water, Wood Bark, Wood Grain, Miscellaneous. No wasted space on this CD-Rom - a collection of extensive tutorials. This CD comes with a full colour multi-page reference booklet for every single texture. An ideal complement to a raytracing CD such as Light Rom 3 etc. **Please note that all these textures are exclusive to this CD-Rom and cannot be found on any other collection.**

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Texture Portfolio & Light Rom 3 for £59.99

NFA AGA EXPERIENCE - VOLUME 2

So you were impressed with AGA Experience volume one?! So was the Amiga press! Hot on its heels comes a brand new release......NFA AGA Experience volume 2! Following the same trend as the first, but offering even better value for money, it contains loads of new and exclusive AGA material to show friends the capabilities of your AGA machine, at a low, low cost. This contains AGA utilities, demos, games, tools, slideshows, animations and more! Compiled (in a similar style to Zoom release 2) within a Magic WB environment, it makes access superbly easy. This CD is going to sell like hot-cakes at the World of Amiga show - order your copy before stocks run out!!

Many New Features :-



FASTER DMS's - The DMS files now unpack more quickly, so you can get at the files you want even quicker! Plus the MagicWB environment makes it instant!
MORE READY-TO-RUN SOFTWARE - Now there is a lot more software ready to run straight from the CD. There are less troublesome DMS files than before!
MORE FLOPPY DRIVE FRIENDLY - Users without Hard Drives will find this CDworks better than the first one. We have even included boot-disks for most ofthe popular A1200 CDROM drives!
LESS 'BABE' SLIDESHOWS AND PICTURES - We have not included any of theboring and unoriginal swimsuit slideshows that you will find on other inferior CDs. These are really just padding, and we would rather use thespace on this CD to bring you only THE BEST software around!
A SELECTION OF UN-DMS PROGRAMS - We have placed every program we couldfind to decompress DMS files on the CD. This makes it a piece of cake to getat the DMS files - either through double-clicking in Workbench or theinterface of your choice. It's so easy!
MORE CD32 FRIENDLY - Due to some bugs in the Amiga operating system, the first AGA Experience did not work perfectly on a networked CD32 - we have hopefully worked around these problems, and the result is a real treat for CD32 owners!
ALL NEW AGA-ONLY SOFTWARE - Since the release of the AGA ExperienceVol 1, there has been a massive amount of new, top-quality AGA software. Virtually nothing has been repeated on this CD from the first one. We now have many new sources of software, to ensure a constant stream of quality titles.
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WS CLIPART

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AMOS vol.2

This is an update to the first AMOS CD - the official library disks upto 638, general Amos PD over 200 disks. Also includes, ready to run, 1600 source files, 100 sprite banks, 260 Ctext banks, 800 samples, music banks, Amos and Amos Pro extensions.

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Over 1 Gigabytes of data on this double CD. Includes MIDI files in various formats (MDI, MIM), hundreds of MB's of music to listen to or change/edit for your own applications. Over 5000 modules, 1000 VOC files, 1000 WAV files, 1000 samples.

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U310 RIP D (2) adventure creator
U313 AUTO DISK LOGGER catalogue your disk
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U324 GRAPHIC util 2 (3) even more graphic tools
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U336 EMULATOR COLLECTION II (lots of emulators)
U335 FREE COPY copy back up commercial games
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U338 MULTI VISION (2) disk/files utilities
U340 HACKER-TOOLS many ripper tools
U350 POOL TOOL - predict horses with the best chance
U351 RACE RATER Similar to above, but both
U352 STAR CAT 2 - create catalogue disk, easy
U355 SEEKER find lost files on floppy & hard drive
U356 FILE UPDATE
U363 DISK REPAIR KIT salvage & repair damaged disks
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U377 ROMANIA II more modern software + packer util
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G675 THE RUNNER amazing graphic adventure
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G682 BANDIT MANIA - Brilliant fruit machine demo
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G690 THE REAL POPEYE 64 (a500 1.3 only)
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G732 DETHELL IN SPACE. Recommend
G735 OVERLANDER Brillant arcade MOON ALERT
G737 SERIOUS BACKGAMMON The best in PD BG

G872 SCHNEBITZ Commercial quality puzzle games
G875 DELEXE GALA v2.3(new) add new feature &bouns gamme + 2 player Recommend
G876 THE KRILLIAN INCENDENT like ELITE2Epic
G878 QUANTUM-Maze collect & escape type games

NEW 101 GAMES PK 3

new 101 pack 3 contains over 100 games. run on all Amigas only £11.99 offer buy any 2 pack together & recieve a free £4 token for use with next order "this offer cannot be used with any other offer current & subject to condition apply

G879 RAG TO RICHES - like MONOPLY
G884 WIPE OUT-mindless blasting game
G885 GODZILLA -Another shootem up
G886 SUPER MEGA FRUIT- All new Fruit Machine
G888 DRIVING MANIAC 3D (fill vector likelndi500) car racing- very fast. RECOMMEND
G889 PLANET FALL - Lunar Lander clone
G891 BUCK TOOTH ADVENTURE Very good multilevel shoot/collect em up RECOMMEND
G892 PENGO 2- Maze type games. Recommend
G893 SUPER OBLITERATION Blast asteroid verysimilar to PANG 2 lot of weapon RECOMMEND
G896 SUPER INVASION II - New SPACING INVADER
G897 THE SHEPERD Brilliant POPULUS clone. REC
G898 ALIEN GENOCIDE (2) Shoot aliens set in space.
G899 PUCKMAN. One of the better PacMan arround.
G900 SUPER-BATTLE ZONE 3D (not WB1.3)
G901 M*A*S*H a (ANTWAR 2) play very similar toLEMMING & WORM, with load of Weapon (Brilliant)
G902 LAST SOLDIER (2) multilevel platform games
G903 CIBERTECH (2) excellent ALIEN BREED Clone
G905 HANGMAN any one for a game?
G907 ACE SPACE nice Platform games
G908 GOLDRUMANIA slide/Klatrix type puzzle games
G910 HARRY-HADDOCK- Brillant platformer games
G912 MANGLE FENDER -Brillant, Smash up other car/tank ect to win. extremely addictive, great !!!
G913 ARCADE GAMES CLASSIC Vol 1 & 2 (2d)
G914 HELICOPTER-play like Desert strike
G915 COW WARS. Very addicted 2 player games
G916 ISLAND -Play like Monoply
G919 COP THE LOT Pro Latest Lottery predictor
G920 LOTTERY PERFORMANCE This version use
G921 MONOPLY. Board games The best version
G922 JET WILLY 3 - excellent platform games
G923 FLAMMING ENGINE-Superb car racing
G924 POWER MACHINES. Gratiously brilliant shoot
G925 SUICIDE-MACHINE Operation wolf style
G926 ZAXXON 3D Superb C64 3D blaster games
G927 BOING V3. Great platformer. recommend
G928 PINTFIT-Animate horse racing games
G929 ARCADE JIGSAW (2d) include LION KING
G930 WHEEL CHAIR GLADITOR-Very fun to play
G931 MARBLE-Brillant New arcade puzzle.
G933 BLACK DAWN 3- THE NEW BEGINNING (2) Superb 3D adventure. RECOMMEND
G934 R3 ROCKET (NEW)very good rockets games
G935 BATTLE SHIP- the finest PD version
G936 LAST LAP - Fast car racing

101 GAMES 2

PRICE ONLY £10.99

This is the very latest all new 101 games compilation pack 2 containing some of the very best in PD games like Zeus, Wonderland, DragonBox etc. Much too many to list

COMPATIBLE WITH ALL AMIGAS

All games are selectable from an easy to use menu & most games come with full playing instructions

G771 STAR WOID (2 Disk) brilliant Thrust
G772 UN-SENSIBLE SOCCER very similar toSensible soccer games. RECOMMEND
G773 FRUIT MANIA -Brillant Fruit machine
G774 TRICKLE TREAT -like DOOM on the PC
G775 FOOT-BALL MANAGER-new version
G782 SOLO ASSAULT 3D like Wing Commander
G783 SEED OF DARKNESS-Brilliant graphic adven
G784 NANO FLY Superb explore game RECOMMEND
G785 THE GREAT GOLD RAID- very addicted
G787 ANT WAR V1.8 (LATEST) not 1.3
G788 ZENO-MORPH -Great graphic
G789 TANK FORCE very good mind SHADOW clone
G790 GREEN FIVE Amazing 3D graphic like
G791 PROFFESIONAL BINGO CALLER
G792 MARTIAL SPIRIT like Street fighter II
G798 6 EXCELLENT CARD GAMES collection
G809 BLITZ 2 fast action shooting games
G810 EXIT 13 Brilliant puzzle
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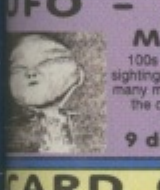
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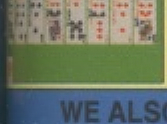
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U121 SPREAD SHEET Very easy to used spreadsheet
U163 QUICK BASE Very powerful Database. Easy to use
U112 RIM DATABASE powerful database + full DOC
U195 AMIBASE - Professional II The best database yet
U227 TEXTRA Can edit several documents at once
U239 FLEXI BASE Small easy to operate database
U256 PENNY WISE very powerful database
U297 VISICALC Great database lots o functions
U356 TEXT-ENGINE V3.4 - full feature wordprocessor
U343 LITTLE OFFICE - database/wordprocessor/spreadsheet
U346 HOME BUSINESS JOURNAL - easy to use database
U357 BON APPETIT DATABASE many receipt
U364 HOME ACCOUNT - Account program
U366 AMICASH regarded as the best account prog. Excellent
U368 JOURNAL full feature account program
U385 LORAN NOTE BOOK database & world map
U390 DATA BASE compilation - best sell to date
U396 MORTGAGE CALC calculate mortgage repayment rate etc
U426 MONEY PROGRAM very good account program
U437 ACCOUNT MASTER V2.8 new account program
U520 HOUSE INVENTORY - ideal for home insurance
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U567 TEXT-PLUS V4.0 pro requires HD & 2meg
U681 TEXT ENGINES V4.1 latest 36,000 word spellchecker
U685 INVENTORY 2 details of home contents, for insurance
U712 EDWORD PROFESSIONAL truly the best wordprocessor
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18 DEMOS
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X74 MADONA (SEX) (3)
X01 SHOWER GIRL
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X09 MARIE WHITTAKER
X24 SABRINA SPECIAL
X25 DIE FILKINGER
X26 MADONA EARLY DAY
X28 KATHY LLOYD
X30 MEGA-MAID
X31 CALENDER GIRL
X32 MAY FAIR
X33 UTOPIA (4 DISK)
X45 GIRLS OF SPORT
X49 PAGE 3 GIRL
X70 GON GON GIRL
X71 TINA SMALLhot
X91 CINDY CALENDAR 95
X96 HOT BABE 1
X97 HOT BABE 2
X98 HOT BABE 3
X99 HOT BABE 4
X100 HOT BABE 5
X101 BIG GIRL II
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Siamese System

■ Price: £129.95 ■ Developer: HiQ Ltd ■ Supplier: HiQ Ltd © 01525 211327 © steve@hiqltd.demon.co.uk

AMIGA SUPERSTAR

Whoever said you can't have the best of the both worlds obviously hadn't heard of the Siamese. Combine the best bits of your Amiga with a PC. Now that's something.

Though I hate to admit it there are some things that the PC does better than the Amiga. This fact has lead many away from the Amiga to the PC. Many have returned, though, after discovering just what advantages the Amiga has and others use both machines for the tasks which they are best at. It's exactly this latter group that the Siamese System from HiQ is aimed at.

Tight integration

In any normal network, both machines exist independently with their own monitors, keyboards, drives and such forth. The Siamese, however, implements a much tighter integration of the two platforms. It is able to do this thanks to three separate components. The first is a SCSI network which enables the Amiga and PC to share a single SCSI hard drive. Cheap and extremely fast, it's a wonder that it's not been done before. Getting files from the PC to the Amiga and vice versa is as simple as dragging them to the shared device where they can be ported onto the other machine.

The second factor is the video switching card which fits into a PC ISA slot. It has a lot of rather confusing connectors but all the leads necessary are provided and are well documented in the small A5 manual. Basically, the card switches between PC and Amiga video to a single VGA style monitor. The switcher is only of use if the Amiga is running a VGA compatible screen mode such as DBLPAL or Multiscan. Either that or you must have a multiscan monitor capable of 15KHz Amiga video frequencies. The Amiga Technologies 1764 is a perfect if expensive choice, the Microvetic 1438 is less ideal but will work too.

The card is controlled by the third element of the Siamese system, the comprehensive software which runs on the back of a serial network in addition to the SCSI network. That means your Amiga's serial port will be used for the Siamese as well. Modem users may need to turn to the Surf Squirrel in to get a second serial port.

The switcher card is connected to the Amiga via a provided serial cable and to the PC via a rather complex pass-through system which involves disconnecting the PC's serial port from the rear panel and plugging it into a socket on the card inside the PC case itself. There's a pass-through ribbon which goes from the card back to a connector which replaces the old serial port. The SCSI network connection is as simple as getting a SCSI lead to reach from the Amiga's SCSI controller to the PC's SCSI controller. Steve Jones of HiQ, told us that they will advise on the leads necessary and aim to supply them in a custom package.



Both the Amiga and PC software is provided on a single MS-DOS formatted floppy disk. The reasoning behind this is that you'd need CrossDOS to mount the shared drive anyway. Mounting the PC formatted shared hard drive is remarkably easy with the commercial version of CrossDOS 6. Unfortunately much more is involved if using the version that comes with Workbench 3.0. Luckily the manual again comes to the rescue and details the procedure in full. Installation on the Amiga side is handled via a competent installer script. Only a single program called SiSys needs to be dragged to WBStartup to install the Siamese software every time on boot-up. SiSys is a Workbench Commodity so it can be controlled via CX Exchange. Running it twice brings up the GUI which allows setting up of the support programs which can also be activated on boot-up if desired.

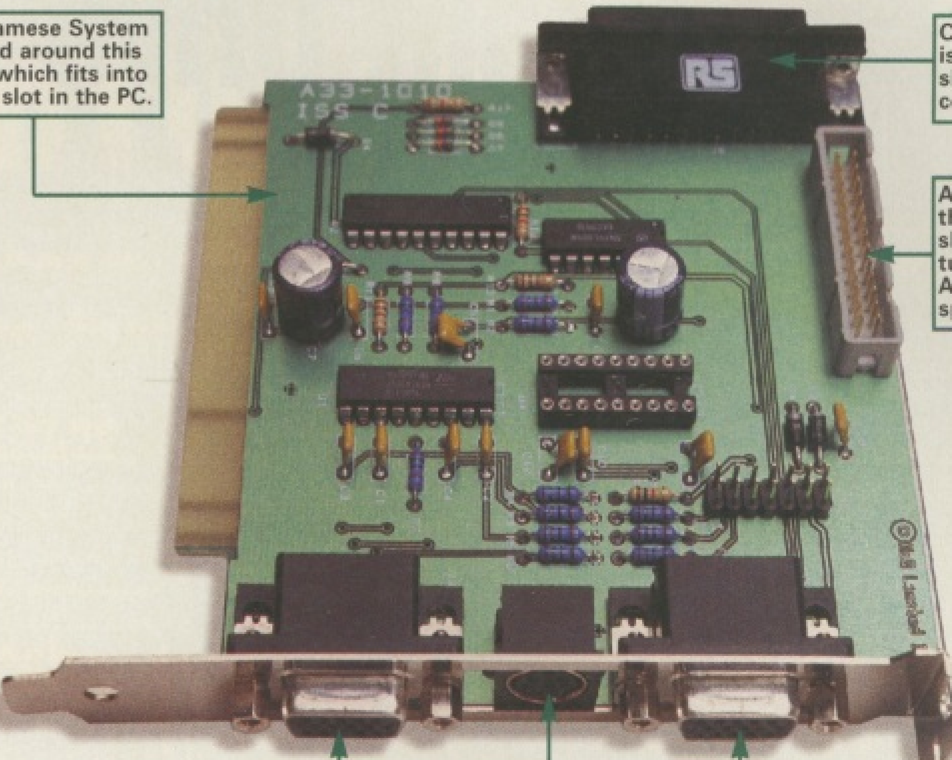
A bit tricky

Installation on the PC is more complex. The manual documents it well but it's important to note that the Siamese software only works under Windows 95 on the PC. A directory on the floppy is dragged onto the PC's C: hard drive and a 'short-cut' made of the main program into Window's start-up drawer so it's activated every boot. The software can be disabled as necessary using W95's control-alt-delete End Task function. Some settings such as the serial network device and baud rate are set by tooltypes on the Amiga and by editing a config file on the PC. None of this seemed too difficult to pose problems though it would have been nice to see a proper installer on the PC since Amiga users have

better things to do than wrestle with EDIT in MS-DOS mode.

If all has gone according to plan and both machines are fired up, the monitor will display the Amiga. If the Amiga is switched off, the PC will be displayed. When the Amiga and the SiSys software is running, a simple press of left Amiga-C is enough to switch screens instantly to the PC. On the PC, after activation of SiSys on boot, the Windows 95 taskbar grows an Amiga depth gadget which is a nice touch. Clicking on this flicks screens back to the Amiga. If the 'Amiga 96' support program is run, a Windows-like task-bar appears at the bottom of the Workbench screen and if the Windows logo is clicked on the screen switches to the PC.

If running a two monitor system, when the Amiga switches to the PC the shared hard drive becomes busy on the Workbench. This ensures that both the Amiga and PC don't try to access the hard drive at the same time. Likewise when the Amiga is active the PC can't access the hard drive though it claims the media has been removed. The PC drive needs to be configured as removable since Windows isn't smart enough to make a drive busy.



ARexx server

There's some other extremely neat support programs provided with the SiSys. They're either activated by SiSys on startup or dropped into Wbstartup. Firstly, there's an ARexx server which supports ARexx commands to flick screens and activate PC programs via Windows. The possibilities of this are endless: for example you could launch a PC picture viewer when clicking on a jpeg in DOpus. Next there's a handy GetTime utility. If the Amiga isn't equipped with a real time clock, this will set the Amiga's time from the PC's clock. UsePcPrinter redirects the Amiga printer output to the configured Windows printer on the PC – Again, an amazingly handy commodity because there is no more printer cable shuffling. ShareCB is even more impressive in that this allows sharing of the PC and Amiga clipboard. Yes, you can clip some text in Word for Windows and past into Cygnus Ed on the Amiga. Clip a word out of the CLI on the Amiga and paste it onto a GUI on the PC. Glorious.

ControlPC, however, is the icing on the cake. This nifty little number does away with the need for two keyboards and two mice on your desk. This program will enable the use of your Amiga keyboard and mouse on the PC. Type in Cygnus Ed, flick screens to the PC and continue to type in Word for Windows, clipping text in with ShareCB as needs be. This is nothing short of amazing! You can also use the PC keyboard and mouse on the Amiga if you'd prefer. Given that PC keyboards are cheap and a multitude of mice are available, this could be a viable option.

Special driver

The Siamese system doesn't work with HiSoft's original Squirrel SCSI for the A1200. Neither does the serial network function with the serial port on the Surf Squirrel but this is not a problem as the internal serial port can be used with the high-speed serial used for a modem. Also, a special driver is needed for the Surf Squirrel as the controller's SCSI ID has to be changed to something other than 7 since the PC card will most likely be using that and can not be easily changed. For the PC, the NCR810 PCI SCSI card is recommended and at only £30 or so, it's not going to break the bank. The PC's popular Adaptec SCSI controllers are also known to work.

On the Amiga side, the A3000's SCSI works fine as does the Octagon 2008 Zorro card though it's recommended to check with HiQ about the compatibility of others. As a general rule, if you can change the SCSI controller's ID, you should be OK. For the A1200, the DKB Ferret SCSI add-on for Power's Viper and Wizard's Magnum 1230 are known to work also. The most common known working SCSI controller is still the Surf Squirrel and it comes recommended to replace the used serial port. Unfortunately, the Blizzard SCSI add-ons for the 1230/60 range is known not to work. A fix may be forthcoming from Phase 5 so if you have such a unit it's worth giving HiQ a call to check.

Revolutionary

I never expected the Siamese system to pull off PC and Amiga integration to this degree. Any software quirks we encountered were quickly eliminated by the author, Paul Nolan of Photogenics fame (see Photogenics 2 review this issue). The Siamese is amazing value for money and brings the strengths of the industry standard PC platform to your Amiga. The power of a Siamese Amiga/PC machine is unsurpassed in the computing world. Whether you're looking to buy a new PC or connecting an existing PC, the Siamese is an essential component. I consider this to be the most revolutionary product of the year for the Amiga. It brings both a decent OS to the PC and some serious and economical hardware power to the Amiga. If you've got a PC or are planning to buy one, get the Siamese now. ■

Mat Bettinson

Basic Siamese pack
Video switching card, Amiga video in cable, PC video in cable, serial network lead, PC serial extender, Siamese System software.........£129.95

Siamese with SCSI devices
As above with Surf Squirrel, PCI NCR 810 SCSI card and SCSI connection cable. £299.95

SIAMESE SYSTEM

A500 · A500+ · A600 · A1200 · A1500 · A2000 · A3000 · A4000

system requirements:
PC with Windows 95 and a SCSI controller. SCSI controller for the Amiga.

ease of use......................88%
Installation is tricky but the package does what it can to make it easier. In use it's perfect.

performance 96%
Innovative hardware coupled with brilliant software. The Siamese is revolutionary.

value for money..............96%
Considering what it does, HiQ are practically giving the product away.

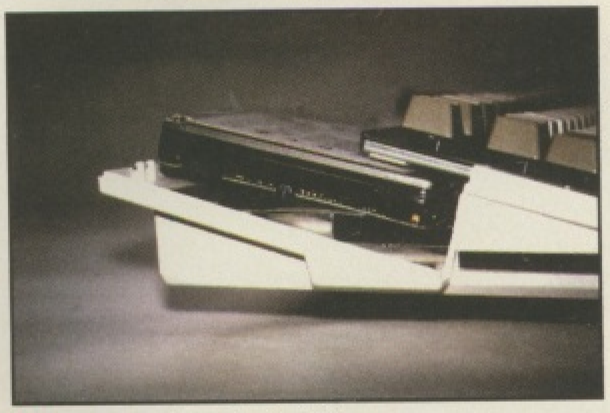
OVERALL
The ultimate Amiga expansion in conjunction with a PC. **93%**

Eyetech Instant Drive

■ Price: £219.95 ■ Developer: Eyetech/Seagate ■ Supplier: Eyetech
✆ 01642 713 185 E-mail: eye-tech@cix.compulink.co.uk

The A1200 was built to house small but expensive 2.5" hard drives but there's enough space for common, cheap high performance 3.5" hard drives. Until now, though, fitting one has been a bit of a pain. However, the Eyetech Instant Drive kit is a full package containing hard drive, instructions, adapters and other bits to make it easy to install.

The Eyetech kit goes overboard in the instructions department with a 30 odd page booklet dubiously recommending that you wire your wrist to the earth pin of a mains plug to avoid static damage. It's OK to leave the Amiga's power supply plugged in (but turned off) and simply touch the 1200's RF shield to discharge any static electricity from your body. But do NOT wire any part of yourself to a household mains socket, earth pin or otherwise.



▲ Eyetech: a good large fast hard drive.

On the plus side, the Eyetech kit provides a fast Seagate Medialist 1.1Gb drive which will give you enough storage space for now and quite a way into the future. The drive itself outpaces the A1200's IDE controller, so it offers the maximum access speed available on your machine. Eyetech provide a good mounting method with adhesive pads pre-screwed onto the drive. There's a good power splitter cable provided and a lead for grounding the drive to the A1200's RF shield. Interestingly, they've elected to cut pin 1 on the IDE cable which means the drive won't hard reset when the Amiga reboots, but this does lead to slightly quicker boot-up times. The Amiga may need to be powered down if the drive hangs though.

Half the instructions can be ignored, although there are good pictures detailing the installation which is a boon. The drive also comes with some utility software pre-loaded and a copy of Optonica's MME multimedia authoring package.

Overall a quality kit with plenty of documentation. Installing the drive isn't a problem if you know what a screwdriver looks like. It's a very large and fast hard drive and as such it's most highly recommended. Get one. ■

Mat Bettinson

A1200 **87%**

Books: Amiga first steps

Bruce Smith books, the mainstay of Amiga book publishing has provided great titles in the past, but many have been considered too difficult for beginners and certainly the average cost of their output, most of which is £15 or over has been a stumbling block. Bookmark Publishing, part of the HiSoft Amiga empire, has with the help of ex-JAM editor Jeff Walker, sought to redress the balance in favour of amateur and the light of wallet.

Surfin'

Of long term value to any Amiga user and potential net surfer, Amiga Surfin' is a well written and comprehensive guide to getting webbed up. In just over 120 pages Karl Jeacle explains the ins and outs of the software necessary (including a full list of what's available, neatly laid out in a glossary at the back) how to set up AmiTCP and every other Amiga net subject under the sun all in a clearly planned and laid out format.

The book looks good and within the limitations of black and white the pictures are clear and the diagrams drawn to illustrate some of Karl's points are simple to follow and instructive.

This book does not, like some of its competitors, err on the side of presuming that the reader has a lot of knowledge of the subject, nor is it too simple, it is just as easy to read whatever your level and at just £6.99 will provide a good startup guide for the newcomer and a handy reference for those intermediates who are still struggling. ■

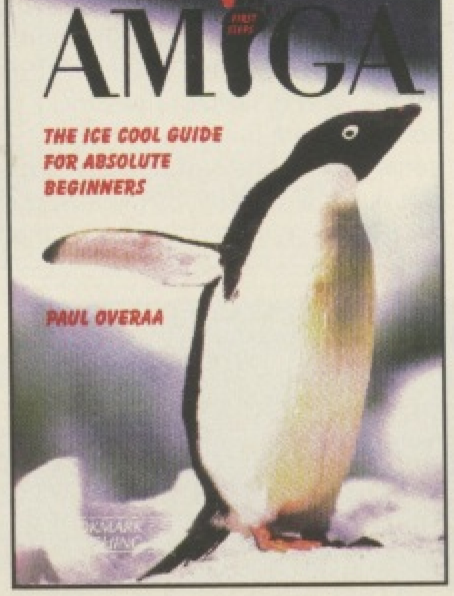


Alan Dykes

90%

The Ice Cool Guide For Absolute Beginners

At £6.99, whether this book will satisfy you depends on just how lost you are with your new Amiga. I say new Amiga because anyone with a pinch of sense and an Amiga which has seen some home dust will have already figured out most of what is going on here. In fact anyone who has used any computer with a windows-type interface before and who has gone through the manual in the box will be disappointed with this book.



The title does say that it is for absolute beginners, and that presumably means the young. But while the design of the first half of the book reflects this, half way through it switches from large bold text and pictures to more standard 12 point output, of the type you would see in any book. This is going to put younger readers off. While there are lots of pictures and big words kids are likely to follow it, but once it starts looking more grown up they are likely to drop it in favour of experimentation, and rightly so. In the length of time it would take to read the book, you could have figured most of it out yourself. ■

Alan Dykes

57%

Both books are available from Bookmark Publishing Ltd, The Old School, Greenfield, Bedford MK45 5DE. Tel: 01525 713671.

Amiga Technologies M1764 Monitor

■ Price: £699.99 ■ Developer: Microvitec ■ Supplier: Various Amiga dealers

AMIGA SUPERSTAR

First there was the Amiga Technologies M1438S, now its big brother is in town.

Microvitec, a UK based specialist monitor manufacturer, made the M1438S for Amiga Technologies. This monitor was based on their own 1438 but with speakers added and an Amiga RGB plug.

The M1438S unfortunately suffered from poor contrast/ brightness control and no picture geometry controls whatsoever. Considering the original Microvitec 1438's screen was actually sharper and clearer it seems odd that the quality managed to be downgraded on the Amiga Technologies version of basically the same monitor. Even the addition of sound was disappointingly implemented; the speakers were weedy and the sound muddy.

Hard to find

However, the M1438S was (and still is for the price – £279) the only real option for Amiga users who wanted to use all the available AGA screen modes.

The age old problem with finding a monitor for the Amiga is that it must handle TV standard 15KHz signals for games and the like but also computer standard 30KHz+ signals for hi-res flicker free displays (Multiscan productivity and DBLPAL modes).

Since my Amiga is equipped with a GFX board, I use not only Amiga native modes from the 15KHz PAL screens and the 30KHz DBLPAL screen modes but also substantially higher displays such as my favourite 800 x 600 mode. The type of monitor needed to handle all this is called a 'multisync', but not all multisyncs will cater for the wide range of Amiga screen requirements. Which is why the Microvitec models became so popular.

Fifteen inch and larger screens are now fast becoming the standard for PC and Macintosh monitors, replacing the 14 inch that we all know and love, but an Amiga multisync larger than 14 inch has not been available ... until now that is. Enter the Microvitec's Amiga M1764.

More control

The M1764 has (thankfully) very little in common with the M1438S. Firstly, it has no built-in speakers at all. This is a blessing in light of the poor speakers installed in its little brother. You can buy a decent set of speakers for next to nothing these days (thanks to our PC friends and their newly discovered 'multimedia'), or you can link to a Hi Fi so there really is no need. But most importantly it has the screen geometry controls that were so sadly missing from the 1438. In



fact it has just about every control you'll need and more, all accessed via a digital On Screen Display (OSD).

Of course it's also a much larger monitor. The 17 inch dimension is measured diagonally across the monitor screen itself and although three inches extra might not sound a lot, if you've ever used a 17 inch monitor and then gone back to 14 inches you'll find yourself squinting at text and more than underwhelmed by its graphical impact.

All change

Adjusting screens with the OSD is immensely satisfying, though it takes a while to work out what's happening. At first I couldn't get any display higher than PAL to work correctly but after reading the manual (which is small but is informative and gets the point across adequately) I found that the Genlock and AV Lock modes, designed to enhance the picture quality with PAL displays, needed to be disabled.

Every screen mode thrown at the monitor displayed perfectly with just a few tweaks of the easy-to-use geometry settings to get each and every mode stretching perfectly border to border. Bliss. If you are using a graphics board, the 1764's ability to handle up to a 64KHz scan rate and a 120Hz refresh means it's right up there with the best PC units. For instance, it'll do 1024 x 768 non interlaced at a rock steady 70Hz which is just fine and dandy. Indeed if you intend to use a PC as well as an Amiga it's ideal.

What's more, the 1764 memorises every screen mode's settings so when you change screen it wobbles for a fraction of a second and then a perfect border to border image will appear (provided you've set the mode up properly in the first place).

Microvitec haven't skimped on the display quality either. It's far, far better than the 1438 and any other monitor I've seen. The display is crisp with perfect convergences of the colour guns which form the on-screen picture out of Red, Green and Blue (RGB) and just a touch of unlinearity (bowing) at the edges. Even the latter problem was quickly cleared up with some tweaking in the advanced geometry settings.

These settings also go so far as to allow the configuration each of the RGB gun gains. In simple terms you can make the picture appear 'warmer' (more red) or 'cooler' (with more blue). I prefer the warm setting which is easy on the eye in a fluorescent lit office.

Eye strain?

The 1764 is a proper low radiation monitor complying to the MPR-II and EC EMR directives. This is very good news if you worry about such things, but on the other hand it does somewhat limit the range of brightness and contrast available. That said it really is nothing like as limited as the M1438's and was more than adequate on a bright Summer's day in the office. I could still see everything on screen with ease.

The 1764 supports power saving modes which means that with an appropriate PD utility/blanker, your Amiga could actually power down the monitor by itself. This is a very nice feature and a first for an official Amiga monitor. Even when in-use, consumption is rated at 85 Watts which is pretty good for a 17 inch unit.

Big is best

Although the price tag might strain your eyes, the 17" display will bring them back into focus pretty smartly. This monitor is substantially more comfortable to use than a smaller model from a visual point of view and thus could have long term health benefits as well as making your software, Workbench and 'net browsing a lot more pleasant and enjoyable. Sure its expensive, but as a professional monitor for someone who uses their computer for long periods day in, day out I cannot recommend it highly enough. ■

Mat Bettinson

AT M1764 MONITOR

A500 / A500+ / A600 / A1200 / A1500 / A2000 / A3000 / A4000

system requirements:
AGA chip-set at least recommended

ease of use 94%
The on screen display is an absolute doddle to use.

performance 95%
Remembers settings for all Amiga screen modes and beyond. Simply fantastic.

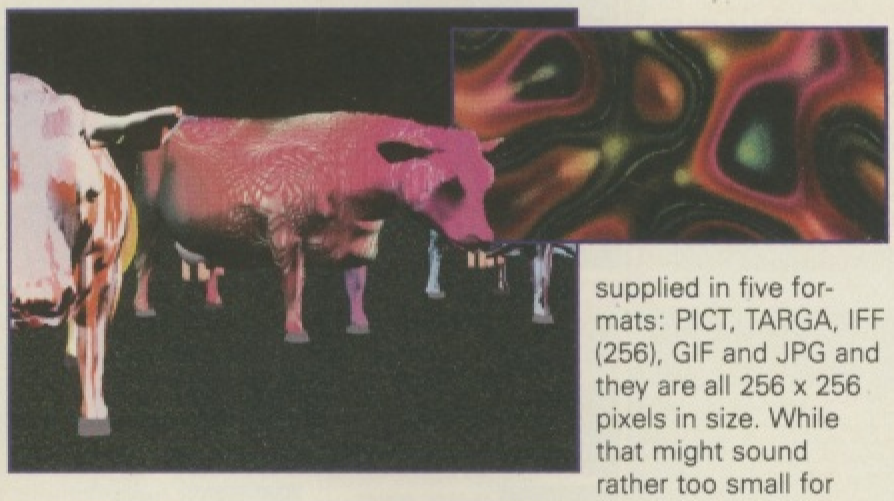
value for money 84%
Not cheap by any means but you do get what you pay for.

OVERALL
The monitor the Amiga has been waiting for. Buy one (if you can!) **91%**

CD-ROM Round Up

Scary special effects, screen blankers, vintage arcade games and more brought to you by Mr T Horgan.

1078 Weird Textures



1078 weird textures are offered on this CD and that's what you get. Each of the textures is supplied in five formats: PICT, TARGA, IFF (256), GIF and JPG and they are all 256 x 256 pixels in size. While that might sound rather too small for many applications, it's worth noting that they have all been cleverly designed so as to tessellate perfectly. This means that they can be repeated to form much larger images as the edges will join with no visible seam.

Most of the textures appear to have been created with plasma generators and procedural texturing tools (like Texture Studio) and most of them have a 3Dish look.

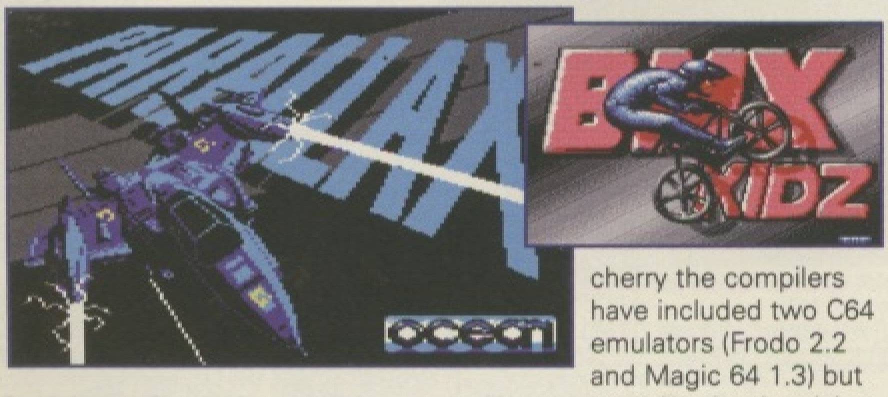
1078 is not supposed to be a complete collection of textures and backdrops for all occasions, so if you're after a CD full of slate and polished steel backdrops then look elsewhere. However, if want to wrap your 3D creations in digital wallpaper from the planet Zog, you've just found your perfect CD.

To make it even easier to use there's a 24 page booklet including with a picture of each texture and its filename. Most will probably find this preferable to the alternative practice of including the index as a series of images on the CD.

Available from: Ground Zero Software, 4 Chandos Road, Redland, Bristol BS6 6PE. Tel: 01179 741 462. Price £9.99 plus 75p P+P.

89 %

C64 Sensations Volume 2



Back in our December 1995 issue we looked at the original C64 Sensations CD rated at just 40%. The reason for the lowish score was because unlike the excellent Speccy Sensations, the Commodore 64 version was merely a collection of music, demos and pictures from the C64 with none of its classic games to be found anywhere.

With this second bite at the cherry the compilers have included two C64 emulators (Frodo 2.2 and Magic 64 1.3) but still no games, despite the claim that the CD contains "all the software that we have collected during our great times on the C64". Apparently they never collected any games.

This lack of games and other failings makes the C64 Sensations Volume 2 as a stand alone CD a complete non-event. Neither emulator can run the demos at anything like full speed and even if they could, would you really want to sit and watch them? The only worthy aspect of the disc is the collection of 'SID' tunes taken from old games. These will please the more seasoned gamer in a nostalgic kind of way but even then the attraction has a fairly short life.

There is another CD available that contains loads of C64 games to load into the emulators. Combining these two discs would let you relive those C64 gaming days (a very fast machine is required though). On its own though, C64 Sensations Volume 2 is something of a let down.



Available from: Epic Marketing, Victoria Centre, 138-139 Victoria Road, Swindon, Wilts. Tel: 01793 490 988. Price: £19.99 plus £1 P+P.

40 %

EMC Index





Some clip art and graphics CDs (such as the EMC Phase series for example) come complete with an index in each directory – a screen made up from thumbnail previews of the images contained in that directory listed alongside their filenames. This makes it quick and easy to locate your required pictures without having to load and display each one separately. However, some CDs are not so well presented and merely offer reams of pictures often stored with meaningless filenames. This is where EMC Index comes in.

EMC Index doesn't contain any clip art or full images of its own. Instead it's full of preview screens made up from existing graphics CD-ROMs, specifically Fresh Arte, Mother of all Clip art, PCX Potpourri, Publique Art, So Much Screenware, Sci-Fi Fantasy, GIFs Galore, Clip art Goliath, Clip art Warehouse, GIF Galaxy, Almathera's CDPD 3, Demo, Demo 2, 10 on 10 and DTV CDs, ProFonts & Clip art, Graphic and Adult Sensations, World of Clip art, ProPics, Pandora, RHS Colour Kollection, Aminet 3-7 and Multimedia Toolkit 1.

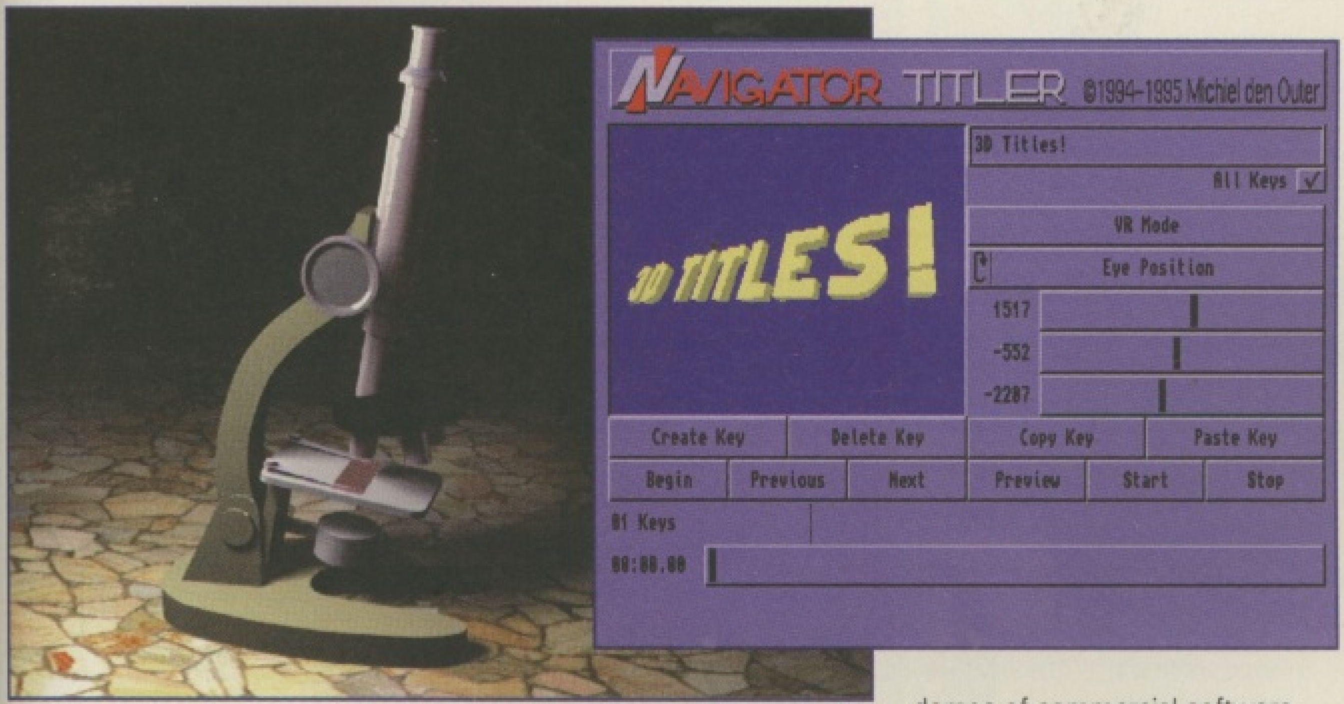
The indexes are supplied as high-res interlaced IFF pictures in 256 colours and also in dithered 16 colours. They can be viewed straight from the Workbench (the icons are set to display via MultiView) or you can use any other tool such as VT which is on the CD, a paint package, Directory Opus or your normal file manager.

Ploughing through a CD of pictures with no index can be so much of a hassle that the offending disc is often banished to the bottom drawer and never used. In these cases EMC Index will breathe new life into those old CDs. You'll probably find plenty of gems that you never knew were on there! The only quibble I have with this CD regards the price. If you have more than a couple of the featured CDs then it's certainly worth the cash, but I would have expected a price nearer the £10 mark. Even so it's a good idea which works very well.

Available from: EMC Computergraphic, 8 Edith Road, Clacton on Sea, Essex. Tel: 01255 431 389. E-mail: sales@emcomp.demon.co.uk. Price: £14.99 + £1 P+P.

80 %

Utilities Experience Volume 1



While the Aminet CDs seem to be the first choice of many Amiga users, some may like the more immediate approach of Utilities Experience where most of the software can be run straight from the CD. This means that there's less on this disc than one full of archived files but it's a lot quicker and easier to scoot around the CD and try everything out this way.

There's far too much software on the CD to list everything but it seems that the compilers have tried to cover all areas with a selection of some of the best software in each. The software is split into the following categories: business, emulation, graphics, datatypes, video, icons and tools, demos of commercial software, comms, music, disk tools, misc, Workbench and Shell, text files, rendering and programming. The amount of software in each department varies a lot. For example, the music section has a decent selection of trackers, module players. One of the most well endowed areas is the graphics section. This has a small selection of tools and viewers for graphics boards and around 100 assorted graphics tools for everyone else. There are also plenty of LightWave 3D objects and a few for Imagine and Real 3D.

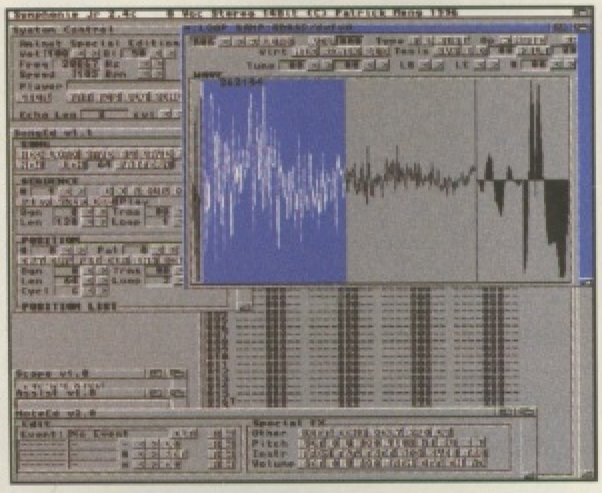
Another notable area is the emulation section which comes with 17 emulators including Shapeshifter, ZXAM Spectrum, PC Task, MSX2, Amstrad, Atari 800, Gameboy, ST and C64 emulators, with hundreds of classic Spectrum games.

Utilities Experience is one of those CDs that grows on you the more you use it. If you like the idea of having a load of tools and utilities all instantly available on one CD then this should be at the top of your shopping list.

Available from: Sadeness Software, 13 Russell Terrace, Mundesley, Norfolk, NR11 8LJ. Tel: 01263 722169. Price: £12.99.

90 %

Aminet 12



The Aminet is the world's largest on-line archive of freely distributable software – now there's a fascinating fact to bring up at your next dinner party. The latest CD taken from the archive has an audio theme and comes complete with full versions of OctaMED 5.04, the eight voice tracker Symphonie and a very powerful sample editor called Sound FX.

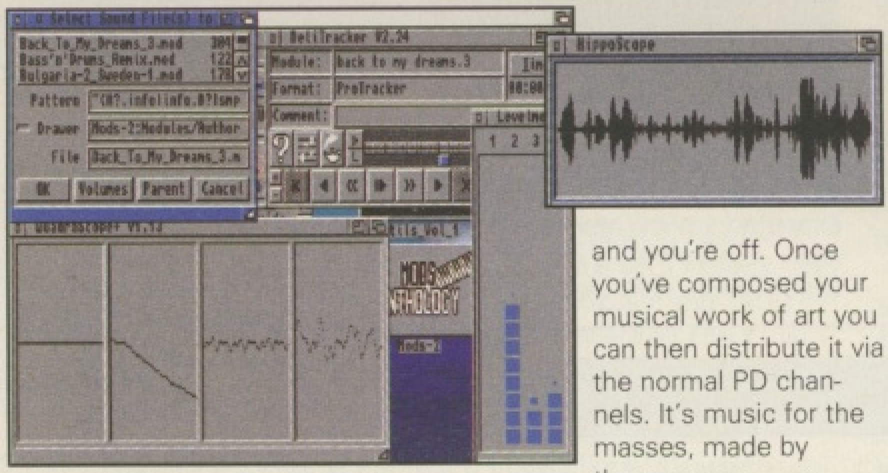
Symphonie is nice little tracker that includes a few realtime effects options, which allow you to process your modules with reverb and echo effects. Sound FX offers an unrivalled amount of sample processing options including vocoder, morph, reverb and noise gate, although the tiny text makes it unsuitable for use on most TVs. Music mods are featured heavily. There's around 500 of them, all the latest uploads plus the top 200 downloads from the past few months. There's also a drawer full of samples, the majority of which have been taken from my sample collection which I included on the November 95 CU CD (cheeky chappies).

As always there's all the new additions to the Aminet that have been uploaded since the last CD release. They're mostly stored in LHA archives and in many cases can be viewed, played, executed or unpacked from the Amiga Guide indexes. Another excellent CD for all Amiga users, especially musicians who missed out on my samples the first time round.

Available from: PD Soft, 217-219 Hamstel Road, Southend on Sea, Essex SS2 4LB. Tel: 01702 306060. Price: £11.99 plus £1 P+P.

91

Mods Anthology Volume 1



The great thing about Amiga music modules (AKA mods) is that anyone can make them. All you need is a public domain tracker program and a handful of samples and you're off. Once you've composed your musical work of art you can then distribute it via the normal PD channels. It's music for the masses, made by the masses.

Mods Anthology is a reflection of just how massive the mod scene is. It's a pack of four CDs containing over 18,000 music modules in uncompressed ready-to-play format. Most of the mods are grouped into drawers named after the authors, and as most of the contributors have supplied a good few tunes each this is quite a reasonable filing system. Hippoplayer and DeliTracker are included for quick and easy playing of the mods from the Workbench. Other software includes a selection of rippers and a few trackers, ie Protracker 2.3, StoneTracker and Music Line Editor.

While there are unquestionably more modules on offer than you could ever hope for, that doesn't necessarily mean you'll like them all. In fact, I find most PD mods rather unimpressive. However, as you're reading and are therefore obviously interested in this CD set, I presume you feel differently. The contributions here are generally from the most highly rated mod musicians on the scene. I've promised myself I'd never say this, but "this is a good collection if you like that sort of thing" (slaps own wrist).

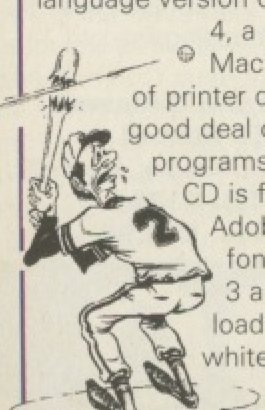
Available from: GTI, Tel: +49 6171 85937. Check the advertisements elsewhere in the magazine for various UK suppliers.

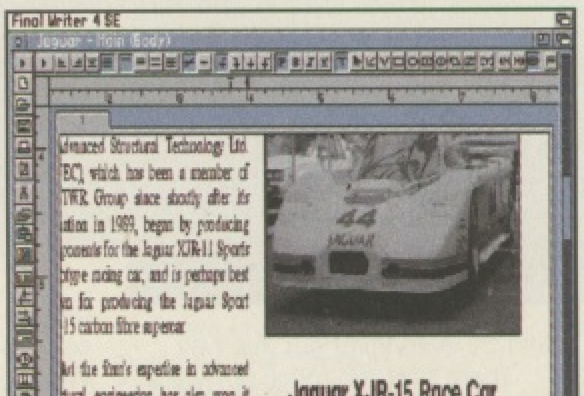
88

Magic Publisher

This is a massive collection of four CDs designed for traditional DTP and on-line publishing.

The first CD is dedicated to application programs. These include a working version of Final Writer 4 SE, a restricted German language version of Wordworth 4, a demo of Font Machine, hundreds of printer drivers and a good deal of shareware programs. The second CD is filled with Adobe Postscript fonts (types 1 and 3 and bitmap) and loads of black and white IFF clip art, most of which are large high resolution scans. Subjects covered in the clip art section include: alphabets, cartoons, design (logos and headings), electronics, food, holidays, maps, military, miscellaneous, music, nature, people, religion, road signs, sports and transport.





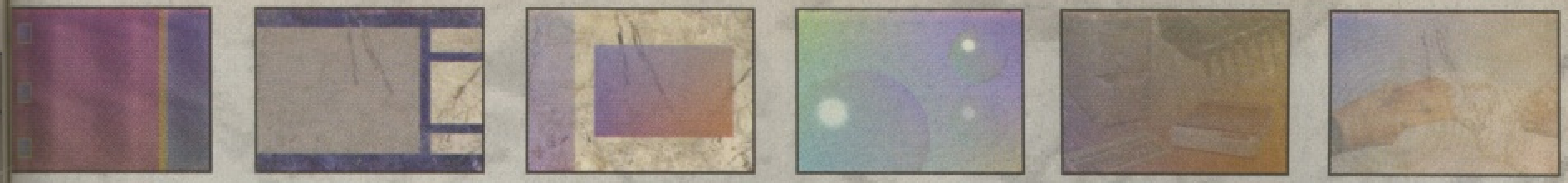
Disc three is full of fonts separated into four types: bitmap, colour, DMF and TrueType. The final CD is labelled BBS Section and contains much of the previous three discs in archived LHA form. This could be used by anyone running a BBS as a ready-made archive of DTP material which could be put on-line to interested users.

This is one of the best collections of fonts and clip art on the market. The claim that it's ideal for WWW publishing is pushing it a bit, although there are a few HTML tools included. Could have done with a bit more documentation but it is still definitely worth checking out.

Available from: GTI, Tel: +49 6171 85937. Check the advertisements elsewhere in the magazine for various UK suppliers.

85

EMC PHASE 4 - DESKTOP VIDEO DREAMS



EMC Phase4 is an excellent, content full CD Rom that is ideal for all Scala MM users" **Barry Thurston, Managing Director, Scala UK**

Bitmap fonts, since bitmap fonts are faster to load, access and use in most video applications (Scala themselves supply bitmaps!) we have included a large number of bitmap fonts, with full IFF previews in 20 sizes between 18 point and 168 point.

Fountain/Intellifont ready Compugraphic CG scalable fonts with IFF previews and automatic install scripts. No more messing about trying to install fonts, just click on an icon and Compugraphic fonts will be installed into your system ready for use! (WB2/3 and hard drive required)

Music modules and sound samples. We have used ScalaMM for years to produce corporate presentation for companies like the YMCA and Powersport International. As a direct result of this, and to satisfy our own needs, we spent many hours finding the best modules and sound samples out of the hundreds of bad ones. For the first time, you will have access to full sorted and tested music modules and sound samples that you can be confident in using in your presentations.

Well over 300 megabytes of "never seen before" professionally designed backgrounds covering subjects such as Weddings and Technology. These absolutely stunning backgrounds will add the professional touch to any video presentation and are supplied in 800 x 600 24bit jpeg along with IFF 256 colour conversions in PAL 768 x 576 and NTSC 768 x 480 formats.

5. *Textured backgrounds, such as Marbles, Stones and Fabrics, again in full video overscan, that are also supplied in 800 x 600 24bit jpeg, PAL 768 x 576 and NTSC 768 x 480 256 colour IFF formats.*
6. *A selection of useful Image backgrounds, again in full video overscan, that can be used for a wide variety of presentation work. Again all supplied in 800 x 600 24bit jpeg, PAL 768 x 576 & NTSC 768 x 480 256 colour IFF formats.*
7. *Countdown animations, testcards, multimedia buttons, on screen timers, over 20 video utilities and a whole host of other stuff including ready to run demos of Optonica's Multimedia Experience, DPaint5 and a custom 38Mb demo of the new ImageVision from Image Lab Technology!*



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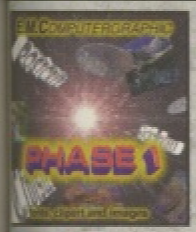
EM Magazine

"The quality of the background images are very high indeed!"

"If you are remotely interested in DTV then you must buy this CD... IMMEDIATELY"

"The backdrops are simply stunning, both for choice of subject and quality" "Spectacular!"

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EM Magazine

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"A dream CD for DTP fans!" "A damned fine CD and a must for DTP enthusiasts"

"Essential for your CDROM library"

"This is an excellent CD" "... it is superbly organised" "...virtually impossible to flaw" "...you need this CD"

"Quite simply, this is one of the best CDs you can get when it comes to fonts and clipart!"

EMC-INDEX

E.M.Computergraphic's INDEX is a CD containing thumbnail index screens of the graphics contained on a wide range of CDs. The following Cds are covered...

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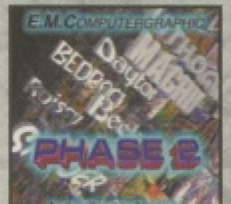
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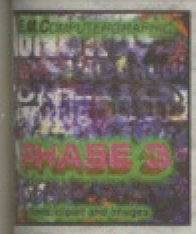
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PD Scene

public domain

We're talking quality with this round-up of games and demos. Tony Horgan is well pleased with his choice of items from the public domain bargain basket.

Demo of the Month

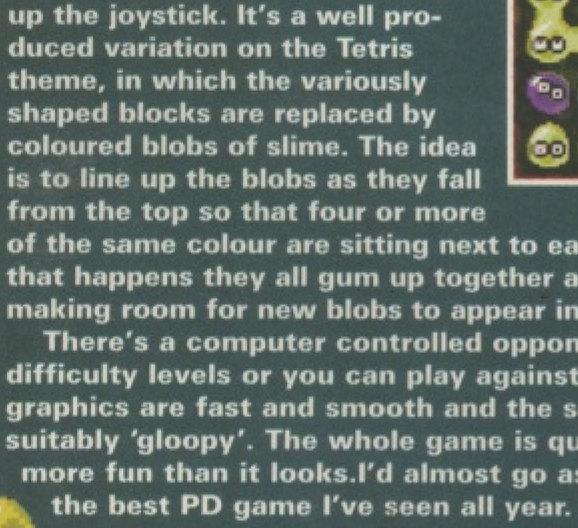
Outfall
game



I've never been the world's biggest fan of Tetris variants but Outfall confounded my expectations within minutes of picking up the joystick. It's a well produced variation on the Tetris theme, in which the variously shaped blocks are replaced by coloured blobs of slime. The idea is to line up the blobs as they fall from the top so that four or more of the same colour are sitting next to each other. Once that happens they all gum up together and then burst, making room for new blobs to appear in their place.

There's a computer controlled opponent with three difficulty levels or you can play against a friend. The graphics are fast and smooth and the sound effects are suitably 'gloopy'. The whole game is quite addictive and more fun than it looks.I'd almost go as far as saying it's the best PD game I've seen all year.

Available from: F1 Licenceware, 31 Wellington Road, Exeter, Devon, EX2 9DU. Tel: 01392 493580. E-mail: steve@f1lw.demon.co.uk. Price: £3.99 plus 75p P+P.



90 %

The Experiment
adventure game

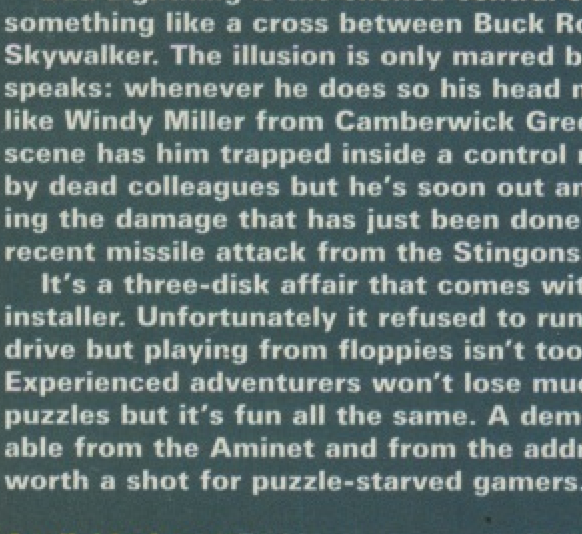


Seeing as Amiga graphic adventures are thin on the ground at the moment it's down to the likes of the F1 Licenceware crowd to keep us supplied. They offered us Graphic Adventure Creator some time ago, a tool that let anyone with a bit of imagination create their own Monkey Island beater. The Experiment is the fruit of such a labour, and it's a pretty good advert for the utility!

Bud Lightning is the clichéd central character and is something like a cross between Buck Rogers and Luke Skywalker. The illusion is only marred by the way he speaks: whenever he does so his head nods up and down like Windy Miller from Camberwick Green. The opening scene has him trapped inside a control room surrounded by dead colleagues but he's soon out and about, surveying the damage that has just been done to the planet by a recent missile attack from the Stingons.

It's a three-disk affair that comes with a hard drive installer. Unfortunately it refused to run from my hard drive but playing from floppies isn't too much hassle. Experienced adventurers won't lose much sleep over the puzzles but it's fun all the same. A demo version is available from the Aminet and from the address below. Well worth a shot for puzzle-starved gamers.

Available from: F1 Licenceware, 31 Wellington Road, Exeter, Devon EX2 9DU. Tel: 01392 493580. E-mail: steve@f1lw. demon. co.uk. Price: £5.99 plus 75p P+P.



80 %

1 Finger
AGA HD demo



I suppose this is meant to be a send up of the classic Nine Fingers demo from Spaceballs. It's made up entirely from moving video clips converted into chunk-o-vision animations. The soundtrack is a jungle techno thing with Wild West train noises tying in neatly with the footage of the author's train set. When it's not chugging around the living room strapped to a Hornby, the camera is aimed at excited lads raving in their bedrooms and re-creating the Nine Fingers intro with an anarchic twist, putting up one finger to the camera (only when Mum was out of the room no doubt). A bit of larf.

Available from: OnLine PD, 1 The Cloisters, Halsall Lane, Formby, Liverpool L37 3PX. Tel: 01704 834 335. Price: £1 plus 70p P+P.





70 %

Chicken Run
game



I know what's running through your mind: here's another rubbish Frogger type game. Well actually ... you're not far off the mark come to think of it.

To be more precise, if you were to simplify the original Frogger concept (tricky but is has been done) so that all you do is run back and forth across a busy road, then you'd have something very close to Chicken Run. The spice comes in the form of the splattered corpses that litter the road when ever you mistime your run. There are also lots of little hedgehogs that get caught in the traffic. It's your job to find out how to stop them getting squashed.

This is one of those games that looks like it was more fun to program than it is to actually play it. Not very good, I'm afraid.



Available from: OnLine PD, 1 The Cloisters, Halsall Lane, Formby, Liverpool, L37 3PX. Tel: 01704 834 335. Price: £1 plus 70p P+P.

50 %

Disco
AGA demo



Here's a neat little boogie woogie demo. Short as it is, lasting around a minute and a half, it's still an entertaining little trip into psychedelic cartoon Discoland. The soundtrack comes complete with synth tom drums, rhythm guitar licks, horn stabs and live basslines, while the visuals combine cartoon characters with swirly orange backdrops. It's a shame the music is let down by some poor edits that jump between the sections.

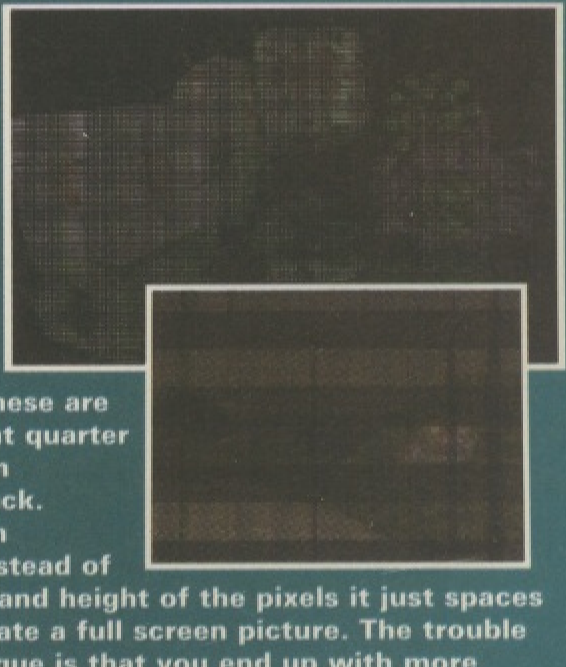
Available from: OnLine PD, 1 The Cloisters, Halsall Lane, Formby, Liverpool L37 3PX. Tel: 01704 834 335. Price: £1 plus 70p P+P.





75 %

Dreamscape
HD demo



Big 3D animations are getting increasingly popular on the demo scene as the limits of realtime effects are seemingly reached. In order to get a decent length of animation into a workable file size these are normally rendered at quarter screen size and then expanded on playback. That's the case with Dreamscape, but instead of doubling the width and height of the pixels it just spaces them out to create a full screen picture. The trouble with this technique is that you end up with more black dots on the screen than coloured ones, so even though the animation looks like it's pretty good, you have to crank up all the levels on your monitor and preferably view it through a saturated composite video connection to get a decent picture.

Aside from that it's an impressive little demo – all four megabytes of it! It will run on ECS machines in greyscale, on AGA in colour and even on a CyberVision 64 bit card. A good download, especially for all you student types with free Internet access (at least when next term kicks off).

Available from: Aminet on-line archive and volume 12 CD-ROM. Path: demo/aga/Dreamscape.lha (4Mb).

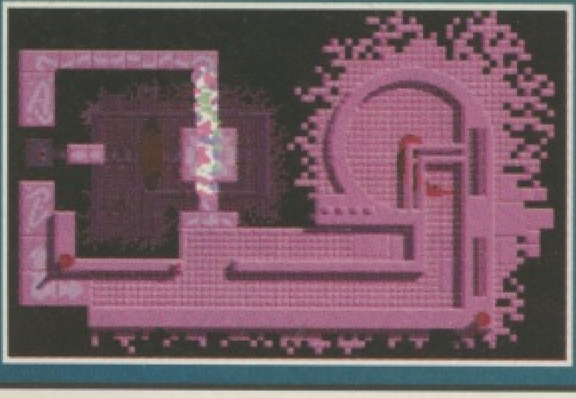
81 %

Dreamstream
game

Some games wind me up, like this one for example. It's a potentially enjoyable shoot 'em up in the typical flip-screen AMOS style, spoilt by basic oversights. For a start it has one of those title screens that repeats the same text 'teletype' fashion between each game. Also you only get one life, so any mistake is punished by a pause for that irritating title screen to load and do its thing. Or how about the horribly slow reaction to the joystick? Or your character's inability to move in diagonal directions?

I wouldn't be bothered normally but there are glimpses of a decent game here. The graphics are neat, although unimpressive, and there are a few good little touches of detail here and there. However, these nice touches don't compensate for the other annoyances.

Available from: Seasoft Computing, Unit 3, Minster Court, Courtwick Lane, Littlehampton, West Sussex BN17 7RN. Tel: 01903 850 378. E-mail: seasoft@magnet.co.uk. Price: £3.50 including P+P.



40%

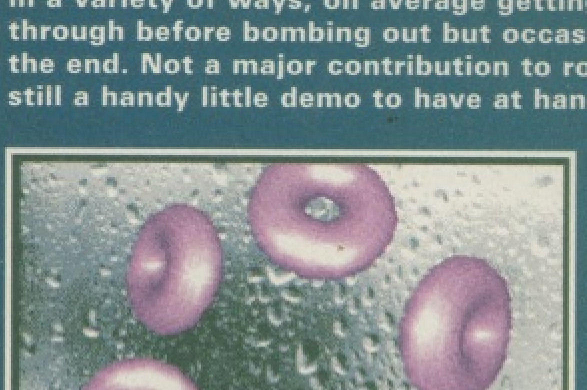
Jam Jam
AGA demo



For anyone who longs for some good wibbly bits (well don't we all?) Jam Jam is just the ticket, with more wobbly features than an African elephant in a jelly factory.

So what does it do? You know the score: it's all zooming spinning plasma and tunnels – undeniably clichéd but like a good banging acid record it does the job even though you know what's coming next.

The downside is that it managed to crash my Amiga in a variety of ways, on average getting about half way through before bombing out but occasionally reaching the end. Not a major contribution to road safety, but still a handy little demo to have at hand when the need arises.



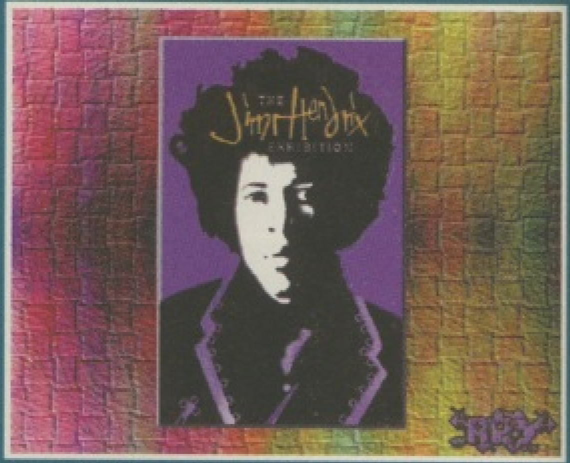
Available from: OnLine PD, 1 The Cloisters, Halsall Lane, Formby, Liverpool L37 3PX. Tel: 01704 834 335. Price: £1 plus 70p P+P.

80%

Shad-Art Slides 3
slideshow



Three disks of varied hand drawn and 3D rendered images are offered with Shad-Art Slides volume 3. The opening set are hand drawn pictures copied from a Ferrari catalogue, while the rest include Dougal from the Magic Roundabout, Jimi Hendrix, a poster from the Woodstock festival and some assorted 3D tracings with lashings of lens flare. Since the advent of cheap CD-ROMs, floppy based slideshows are rather dated, and this is no exception. It fits only fifteen pictures onto three disks. Aside from that it's a nice collection of pictures that could inspire budding artists.



Available from: OnLine PD, 1 The Cloisters, Halsall Lane, Formby, Liverpool L37 3PX. Tel: 01704 834 335. Price: £3 plus 70p P+P.



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WATCH IT MATE, THAT'S ME HEAD......

THIS IS AN OFFICIALLY OUTRAGEOUS ADVERT FOR THE OFFICIALLY NUMBER 1 PD COMPANY IN THE WORLD. YES, WE HAVE CERTIFICATES AND EVERYTHING, MISSUS.... SO ANYONE THINKING ABOUT GOING ANYWHERE ELSE SHOULD CONSIDER EXACTLY WHO HAS THE SPARKLING CROWN!!!!

YES, WE OFFER BETTER, CHEAPER, FASTER SERVICE THAN MOST CAN THINK IS POSSIBLE! WE'D LIKE TO THANK ALL THE THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE WHO VOTED FOR US AND MADE US THE WINNER BY MILES. THANKS, RESPEK! AND WHAT MAKES US THE BEST? WELL THERE'S:

* THE LOWEST PRICES IN THIS MAGAZINE BY A VERY LONG WAY (ANYWHERE ELSE WITH 10 DISK PACKS FOR 2.50, I DON'T THINK SO....)
* 24 HOUR TURNAROUND. WITH OUR TURBO POWERED PD WE ALWAYS OUTSTRIP THE COMPETITION FOR SPEED. WE'RE NOT CALLED V12 FOR NOTHING!
* THE LARGEST SELECTION OF HIGH QUALITY PD ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD. OVER 14,000 TITLES AND ALL AT 50P EACH! IF YOU WANT IT, CHANCES ARE WE ALREADY HAVE IT AND 3 DIFFERENT PROGRAMS TO CHOOSE FROM TOO!
* UNDENIABLY THE BEST CATDISK IN THE WORLD, THERE QUITE SIMPLY ISN'T A CATDISK THAT HAS HAD SO MUCH TIME SPENT ON IT. SORRY, BUT PERFECTION WAS DEMANDED IN A CATDISK AND WE BELIEVE WE'VE GOT AS CLOSE AS IT'S POSSIBLE TO DO WITHOUT LOOKING INHUMANLY SMUG ALL YOUR LIFE.
* MORE WORLDWIDE SWAPPING CONTACTS THAN YOU COULD IMAGINE, PD COMES IN FROM DOZENS OF LOCATIONS ON EVERY CONTINENT (EXCEPT ANTARCTICA, CURIOUSLY.....) THIS MEANS MORE EXCLUSIVE PD THAN YOU'VE EVER SEEN! AND ALL AT 50P EH, I CAN'T IMAGINE HOW IT'S DONE....).
* FRIENDLIER SERVICE THAN YOU COULD EVER DARE TO EXPECT. NO QUIBBLES RETURN POLICY GUARANTEED, AND THAT'S A PROMISE.

WE HAVE, DUE TO THEIR LOOKING LIKE NO RESPITE FROM THE POPULARITY OF THE 10 DISK PACKS, MAINTAINED THEM FOR SALE ONCE MORE. THIS WAS MAINLY DUE TO ALL THE NICE LETTERS WE GOT ASKING TO EXTEND IT SO CUSTOMERS COULD BUY THEM ALL WHEN THEY COULD AFFORD IT. AREN'T WE NICE? WHAT DO YOU MEAN, NO????

OUR NORMAL PRICES (WHEN WE'RE NOT PUTTING TOGETHER SOME INSANE PACK OR OTHER THAT'LL LIKELY BANKRUPT US!) ARE MEASLY PEASLY WEASLY LOW, BUY THERE'S SOMETHING A BIT SPECIAL THIS MONTH, BUY 20 DISKS FROM US AT 50P EACH, AND, AND, YES, AND, WE'LL GIVE YOU 10 FREE ON TOP OF IT OF YOUR CHOICE! BLIMEY MISSUS! YEP, 30 DISKS FOR 10 QUID, AND 30 DISKS OF YOUR CHOOSING TOO! 30P A DISK SEEMS LIKE HEAVEN IN A SMALL JAM JAR TO ME, HOPE YOU AGREE....

**1-5 DISKS = 65P EACH
6-9 DISKS = 60P EACH
10+ DISKS = 50P EACH
20+10 DISK OFFER = 10 QUID FOR 30 DISKS INCL P+P!!!!
P+P IS ONLY 50P ON ANY SIZE ORDER!
DISKS ARE 25P EACH INCLUDING P+P IF YOU SUPPLY THE BLANKS!**

SO NOW WE'RE THE BEST WE CAN FLAUNT OUR UNDOUBTED SUPERIORITY AND SIMPLY LOOK EXTREMELY PLEASED WITH OURSELVES ALL DAY, WRONG! WE WANT TO KEEP THE TITLE AND WORK LIKE LITTLE SQUIRRELS OR OTHER HARD WORKING LITTLE FLUFFY MAMMALS TO KEEP IT! PRICES CONTINUE TO BE LETHALLY LOW, 24 HR TURNAROUND IS NOW GUARANTEED OR YOU GET FREE DISKS FOR EVERY DAY'S DELAY (!), AND NEW TITLES KEEP COMING (OO-ER) IN THE CATDISK. THERE'S NOONE BETTER THAN US, IT'S JUST NOT POSSIBLE I'M AFRAID....
AND A MESSAGE TO ALL WORKBENCH 1.3 USERS, WE STILL SUPPORT YOUR SYSTEM AND HAVE THE LARGEST 1.3 COLLECTION IN THE WORLD, OUR CATDISK WORKS FINE FROM SCRATCH ON 1.3, SO GIVE THE OLD FRIEND A BOOT WITH SOME NEW EXCITEMENT! OR COURSE, WB2 AND AGA AMIGA OWNERS ARE SUPPORTED BETTER THAN A PIG ON STILTS TOO, EVERYONE'S WELCOME, EVERYONE'S CATERED FOR.
GOR BLIMEY GAV'NA, GET ON THE V12 LURVE TRAIN AND GO TO HEAVEN!

AND OF COURSE, THE FIRST STEP INTO V12 PALACE (TAKE THE 12TH TURN OFF FROM THE M180) IS THE CATDISKS. WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM A CATDISK, COS IT'S LIKELY WE WILL HAVE INCORPORATED IT INTO THIS BALLISTIC LITTLE DOUBLE BARRELLED BABY! OVER 45,000 LINES OF TEXT, IT WILL AUTOMATICALLY DETECT WHAT MODEL OF AMIGA IT IS IN AND CHANGE AS IT BOOTS TO USE THE SYSTEM TO BEST EFFECT, HAVE A HD AND WANT TO INSTALL BOTH DISKS TO IT? NO PROBLEM, IT'S ONLY ONE MOUSE CLICK AWAY, AS WELL AS ANOTHER ICON TO REMOVE IT ALL TOO! DON'T HAVE A HD BUT WANT TO INSTALL IT TO RAM INSTEAD? NO PROBLEM EITHER, OPTIONAL RAM INSTALLATION FOR OVER 1500% SPEED INCREASE, AND ALL IN 1.5 MEG OF RAM (CHIP OR FAST)! HAVE THE STANDARD 1 MEG AND WANT TO RUN IT COMBINED FROM RAM AND FLOPPY? NO PROBLEM EITHER!! IT WILL INSTALL CERTAIN REGULARLY USED PARTS OF THE CAT FOR A 100% INCREASE IN SPEED! A MOUSE DRIVEN INTERFACE, ANIMATIONS, MUSIC, PICS, STILL HIRES LACED GRAPHICS (EVEN ON AN A500!) AND THE HUMOUROUS LISTINGS THAT WE ARE WELL KNOWN FOR. OH GO ON, ASK FOR IT FREE. YOU KNOW YOU WILL.......

AND THOSE STUNNINGLY POPULAR 10 DISK PACKS FOR 2.50? OH DEARY ME HAVE THESE DEPT US BUSY, NONE OF THEM HAVE FAILED TO SELL IN THEIR THOUSANDS, AND SO THEY'RE STILL HERE! HERE'S THE GEN:

HEAVEN & HELL = 10 DISKS COVERING ALL THINGS STRANGE AND ODD, FROM BLACK MAGIC AND POTIONS, TO UFO'S AND MONSTERS. EVERYTHING THAT YOU DON'T TALK ABOUT BUT WANT TO KNOW....

SIZZLING STARS = A 10 DISK AGA PACK OF 100% CELEBRITY PICS, SOME OF THE NAUGHTY STARS ON HERE WILL AMAZE YOU. UNDOUBTEDLY THE BEST AGA ADULT TITLE IN THE PD WORLD AT THE MOMENT.

ADULT EDUCATION = ANOTHER 10 DISKS PACK, AIMED AT GCSE LEVEL AND ADULT LEARNING, COVERING ALL CURRICULUM SUBJECTS. SURELY A GOOD LEARNING AID IN THE EASE OF YOUR OWN HOME.

GET FRESH GAMES = 10 DISKS OF THE LATEST GAMES FOR YOUR AMIGA. ALL THE VERY LATEST GAMES THAT HAVE PROVED SO POPULAR TO ONE AND ALL. GET THIS AND IT'LL KEEP YOU HAPPY FOR AGES..

HOME SECRETARY PACK = CONTAINS WORD PROCESSORS, SPREADSHEETS, DATABASES AND BUSINESS TOOLS TO MAKE YOUR WORK LIFE THAT MUCH SIMPLER. ALL THE MOST POPULAR TITLES IN THIS FIELD ARE INCLUDED.

SPORTS FANATIC PACK = 10 DISKS OF GAMES TO MAKE YOUR SPORTING DREAMS COME TRUE! CONTAINS ALL THE BEST SPORTS FROM TENNIS, FOOTBALL, GOLF, CAR RACING, YOU NAME IT. GET INTO ALL THE BEST SPORTS WITHOUT MOVING FROM YOUR ARMCHAIR.....

HAM HEAVEN - THE REVENGE = SECOND 10 DISK GLAM PACK FOR NON AGA SYSTEMS, CONTAINS ANOTHER 10 DISKS FULL OF THE BEST BABES YOU CAN EXPECT TO SEE THIS SIDE OF BOLIVIA.

TRIPPIN' TOONZ = 10 DISKS OF THE BEST MUSIC MODS, SAMPLES & SOUND EFFECTS TO HIT THE COMPUTER WORLD. USE THEM FOR THE CREATION OF YOUR FIRST EVER BALLAD (OR TO SCARE YOUR GRANNY). IT'S UP TO YOU. FOR AN EXTRA 1.00 YOU CAN GET 4 DISKS OF THE BEST MUSIC CREATING PROGRAMS TO FORMULATE YOUR OWN TUNES AND BECOME THE NEXT TOM JONES (IF YOU'D WANT TO..)

GET FRESH UTILITIES = THE LATEST UTILS, 10 DISKS AND MORE NEW TOOLS TO EASE YOUR FURROWED BROW. CONTAINS ALL THE BEST TOOLS TO HELP YOU ACHIEVE THE SEEMINGLY UNACHIEVABLE.

SUMMER SENSATION PACK = 10 DISKS TO SHUT...ERM PLEASE THE KIDS ON THEIR SUMMER HOLIDAYS, CONTAINS ENOUGH GAMES TO PLEASE THE MOST FRANTIC KIDS, SOME LOVELY DEMOS TO MAKE THEIR EYES POP AND SOME SERIOUS STUFF FOR THEM TO PRETEND THEY'RE USING WHILE YOUR WATCHING. IF YOU WANT SOME PEACE, GET THEM THIS....

ALL PACKS ARE 10 DISKS, NOT COMPRESSED ONTO ONE OR ANYTHING SCABBY LIKE THAT, AND ALL INCLUDES POSTAGE AND PACKAGING + A FREE CATDISK! WE'RE WAITING FOR EVERYONE ELSE TO MATCH THIS OFFER, WE'RE HERE TO SHOW YOU THAT WE CAN SUPPLY YOU WITH 10 DISKS FOR THE PRICE THAT MOST LIBRARIES SEND YOU 2, IT REALLY IS TRUE! AS MICHAEL JACKSON WOULD SAY ACH, YAH! (OR SUMMAT) ! PACKS ARE NOT LIMITED TO ONE PER PERSON, YOU CAN HAVE ALL TEN IF YOU WISH, OR 10 OF EACH IF YOU ARE SLIGHTLY MAD! PLEASE SPECIFY WHETHER YOU WANT THE CATDISK OR NOT WITH PACKS AS SOME PEOPLE WILL ALREADY HAVE THEM FROM PREVIOUS ORDERS.

FOR A CATDISK, RING THE NUMBER ABOVE, OR WRITE AND ASK. IT'S FREE THIS MONTH SO GET IT AND START SEEING HOW A PD COMPANY SHOULD BE! WHAT HAVE YOU GOT TO LOOSE? WE DON'T BITE YOU KNOW.

GREETS FOR THIS MONTH GO OUT TO WOLFMAN, TOPDOG, FREAK AND BUDDA OF NFA, ICEMAN OF CARNAGE, ICON OF LSD, MICK HEYES, MICHAEL CARTER, OJ SIMPSON, STEFAN MANSIER, CHRIS HORNE (IS IT NEXT MONTH YET?) ROB DAVAIU, RIGSBY, GUNTERHEIM SUPPLIES, MADONNA, KYLIE, DANNI, BONJOVI, KISS, DANNY GIBSON (DMC DESERVES 99%!), TROUSERS MC BERNIE, JACOB GRIZZLY, BENTLEY BELISHA AND FRILLY MIDGE AND MARK LLOYD.

FLATBED SCANNING SERVICES

FLATBED SCANNING IS NOW AVAILABLE TO A PROFESSIONAL STANDARD, WITH DPI UPTO 2400 X 2400 DPI, EVERY FILE FORMAT FROM ILBM TO JPEG, AND EVERY RESOLUTION FROM LORES-NTSC TO SUPERHIRES-FULL OVERSCAN PAL AND CUSTOM RESOLUTIONS BEYOND THAT. WE OFFER THIS SERVICE OUT TO ANY PD COMPANY, OR ANY AMIGA BASED COMPANY AT DISCOUNT TRADE PRICES, AND ALSO TO ANY AMIGA OWNING INDIVIDUAL AT THE VERY LOW PRICES, RING US FOR DETAILS, WE ARE AT LEAST 3 TIMES CHEAPER THAN DEDICATED SCANNING BUREAUS. ANY AMIGA COMPANY WHO WISHES TO OFFER OUR SERVICE CAN ARRANGE AN AGREEMENT WITH US FOR SOME SERIOUS DISCOUNTS, SO MAKE THOSE SCANNING DREAMS COME TRUE! REMEMBER ALSO, OUR DIGITISING SERVICE, WHEN ALLIED WITH SCANNING, CAN OFFER COMPUTER REPRESENTATION OF ANY OBJECT, ANY PICTURE UP TO ABOUT 4 SQUARE METERS(!) WITH NO LOSS OF QUALITY. PLEASE RING FOR FURTHER DETAILS.

We stock all the collections including Assassin's 1-250, Fred Fish 1-1000, Scope 1-220, Amigan, Arug, New Zealand, Imagine Object collection, Clipart collection, Barbie, Amos, Legal Tools 1-149 and thousands more. we now also sell CD's cheaper than everyone else, every Amiga CD available is, erm, available from us!
14,000+ TITLES , THATS MORE THAN A LIBRARY WITH LESS THAN THAT!

13,500+ titles, that's more than a library with less than that!

PD Utilities

If keeping your garden bird collection updated isn't on your agenda for these hot summer months take a look at what else Mat Bettinson has come up with after a rummage through his Public Domain drawers.

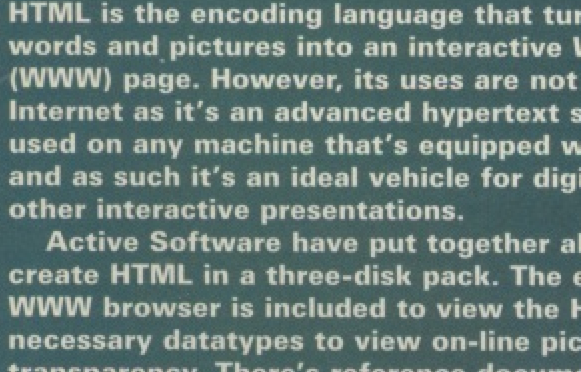
HTML Hoard
HTML creating/ viewing tools

Utility of the Month

HTML is the encoding language that turns a bunch of words and pictures into an interactive World Wide Web (WWW) page. However, its uses are not limited to the Internet as it's an advanced hypertext system that can be used on any machine that's equipped with a Web browser, and as such it's an ideal vehicle for digital magazines and other interactive presentations.

Active Software have put together all you need to create HTML in a three-disk pack. The excellent Voyager WWW browser is included to view the HTML, as are the necessary datatypes to view on-line pictures with proper transparency. There's reference documentation on the HTML standard, some example GIF pictures and gadgets and the EdWord text editor included too. The text editor can be used if you're keen on learning how to sculpt quality HTML by hand (our Wired World tutorial is an excellent guide for this). Alternatively if you'd rather have the hard work done for you then the powerful Magic User Interface based Web Maker is included to add the tags automatically via its graphical interface.

Either way, this package has nearly all you need to get started with HTML. It's worth noting though that Voyager and Web Maker require a recent version of MUI which is not included. But this aside, if you're at all interested HTML authoring, get HTML Hoard.

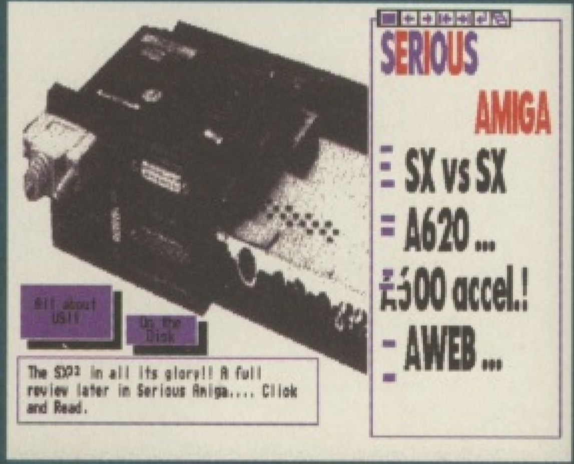


Available from: Active Software, PO Box 151, Darlington, County Durham DL3 8YT. Tel: 01325 352260 Price: £3.75 inc P+P.

95%

Serious Amiga issue 1
disk magazine

As a timely reminder of everything that's wrong with custom format disk magazines, here comes Serious Amiga. This disk magazine was developed using Hyperbook which has not made it any easier to read or get around. First of all, the icon tooltypes are directed to the author's hard drive and needed modifying before it will work. However, when you finally do get it to run you're thankfully rewarded with an interesting array of articles and a reasonably well thought-out structure.



Obviously some effort was put into Serious Amiga. There's a CD32 SX1 vs SX32 comparison, an Apollo 620 accelerator review, games news and more. But as I've indicated the whole show is really let down by the awful Hyperbook format.

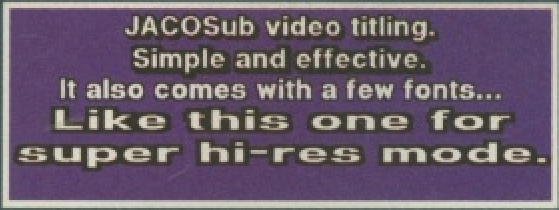
There are nice fades and transitions but every picture is rendered in just two colours (black and dark grey). At one stage there's an incomprehensible blob that's annotated with descriptions ... apparently it's a Gloom Deluxe screenshot, though you'd never guess by looking at it. Indeed in certain places some of the content is dubious and there are rather a lot of spelling mistakes too (I say, throwing stones in a glasshouse).

The authors lead off by saying they started the project in HTML but had a problem with the browser. Hopefully they'll get the browser working for the next issue and drop Hyperbook totally. Do this and the mag will begin to show promise.

Available from: Serious Amiga Office, 4 Humber Side Lane, Easington, East Yorkshire HU12 OSW. Price: £1.00 plus 30p P+P.

68%

JCOSub 2.5
video titler



JCOSub is a titler very much from the old school. The titling package compiles the scripts, although it doesn't generate a stand alone presentation. Effects-wise JCOsub is fairly weak, only the most basic dissolves and fades are present. What's more, the output is marred by a JC logo on the bottom right of the screen until a $26 shareware fee is stumped up. I'm all in favour of shareware but asking money for a package as basic as this seems a little rough. It does, however, support standard bitmap fonts and gives them various shadow effects. The column formatting features are quite handy too. Although the documentation is supplied merely as raw text (rather than AmigaGuide) it's adequate. The demo scripts are commented which is handy.

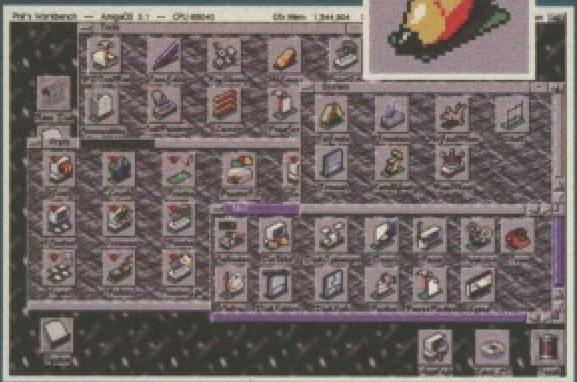
Overall, this is a reasonable titler for low-end machines. If the requirements of Videostage Pro (Cover disk March 96 CU Amiga Magazine) are beyond your system then this would be worth a try, although there are better alternatives in the public domain.

Available from: Your Choice PD, 39 Lambton Road, Chorlton, Manchester M21 OZJ. Tel 01618 818 994. Price: £1.50 plus 70p P+P. (Aminet Path: gfx/show/jcosub25.lha 315K)

72 %

NewIcons 2.0
replacement icons





NewIcons is a very popular replacement pack of icons for your Workbench because, unlike others, it doesn't need a silly custom palette to look good.

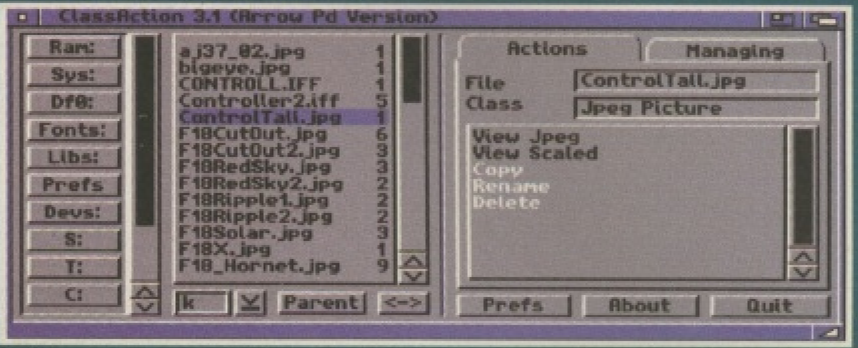
To allow this NewIcons do something very special: they keep the palette and image information in the Icon Tooltypes. In order to see the fancy icons you need to run a small program in the background which automatically translates the Tooltypes data of each icon into the icon image. Otherwise all you see is a small square (the result of the Workbench adding a border to an invisible icon). The advantage of this is that you get colourful icons without palette clashes.

The icons are simple and clear and are mostly viewed from an isometric 3D angle. A gentleman called Aesculape has created massive archives of thousands of New Icons for every imaginable application. If you like the look as pictured here and fancy high-colour icons without the palette clash then NewIcons is definitely for you. You might like to request some of the Aesculape archives from Your Choice PD too.

Available from: Your Choice PD, 39 Lambton Road, Chorlton, Manchester M21 OZJ. Tel 01618 818 994 (Aminet path: util/wb/NewIconsV2.lha 409K, Aminet path: pix/icon/AESicons(1-8).lha 100K each) Price: £1.50 plus 70p P+P.

90 %

Class Action 3.1
file recogniser



It's nice to receive some top class PD. There are two versions of the same package on this disk from Arrow PD. Version 2.8 uses the standard Gadtools GUI while version 3.1 uses MUI which you'll either loath or love depending on your preference. Class Action allows you to teach your system to recognise specific types of files (eg. pictures, samples, LHA archives) and then process them accordingly whenever they are selected. For example, by teaching it to recognise LHA archives and linking these to your LHA command, you can automatically decompress an archive by clicking on it from the Workbench. Normally this would have no effect, or at best the Workbench would present you with a little command line box, so this is incredibly useful.

The 3.1 MUI version also has a very basic directory utility mode which allows moving around your drives and performing certain actions in conjunction with the usual copy, move and delete type stuff. This is one of those utilities which you'll build into your system and forever after take for granted. Excellent.

Available from: Arrow PD, PO Box 7, Dover, Kent CT15 4AP. Price: 99p plus 70p P+P.

90 %

Garden Birds
bird database

Garden Birds is a multimedia database of common birds you might find in the British garden. It's not an OS legal presentation but it does run on the Workbench. Oddly, though, it runs in a split-screen mode with pictures and menu buttons on the bottom and fixed GUI control panels on the Workbench.

As for the information included, there are some basic details of birds such as the Blue Tit, Woodpecker and Chaffinch in conjunction with pictures of each and the difference between the sexes. Normally I'd be a fan of having this run on the Workbench but since you can't move the GUIs around, it essentially stops you from doing anything else while browsing the database.

Unfortunately it doesn't have the courtesy of reverting to your normal Workbench palette after it exits either. All the same, it's hard drive installable for ease of use and if you're interested in Britain's avian fauna then it's worth a spin.

Available from: WildLIVE, 2 Southgate, Lydford, Okehampton, Devon EX20 4BH. Price: 75p plus 75p P+P.



78 %

Pro-GRAB™... *Rapid Frame Grabbing on your Amiga*

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Select any video source with S-VHS or composite output. This could be your camcorder, TV with SCART output, satellite receiver, domestic VCR/player or standard TV signal passing through your VCR/player... the choice is yours.

Grab images with your camcorder including S-VHS...



or, Take a signal from a TV with SCART output...

or, Use the signal from your satellite receiver...

or, Grab TV or video pictures from your VCR's video output including S-VHS.

STAGE 2...

With ProGrab's software, select an image you wish to capture using the on screen preview window and Grab (because the hardware grabs frames in real time, there's no need for a freeze frame facility on the source device). Once grabbed, simply download and view the full image on your Amiga screen. ProGrab also includes a Teletext viewing and capturing facility from either TV or satellite sources.

STAGE 3...

Use the 'grabbed' image with your favourite word processor, DTP or graphics package.

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Supports all recent Amigas and is also fully AGA Chipset compatible. You can render images in any Workbench screen mode resolution including HAM8 mode (Amiga RAM permitting).

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Saves and Loads images in IFF/ILBM, IFF/ILBM24, JPEG, BMP, PCX, and TARGA file formats. ProGrab saves animations as Anim5 files and animations with sound (requires PCMCIA interface and separate sound sampler) as Anim5 + 8SVX files. A range of image processing effects, palette computing routines (AGA only) and dithering methods are also new to ProGrab Version 2.5.x Photogenics fully supports ProGrab with a custom 'Loader' to enable grabs directly from within the program - saving YOU time!

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- SUPPORT FOR VIRTUAL MEMORY
Allows the highest resolutions - Even with low memory Amigas (All Hard Drive Systems without the need for an MMU, requiring just 1Mb. Hard Drive Space).
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With either Terrestrial or Satellite TV signals.
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Double Resolution and 4 times the area available with previous ProGrab software.
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Now works with composite PAL, SECAM and NTSC Straight from the box!

(*Standard ProGrab hardware is PAL/SECAM/NTSC compatible. Interlace mode options are available with PAL & SECAM only. NTSC Only models are available to special order which then support the interlace mode fully. Please ask us for full details.)

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- **ProGrab™ 24RT Plus Digitiser**
- **Mains Power Supply Unit**
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PCMCIA Interface for A1200 and A600 - Only £34.95

ProGrab's optional PCMCIA Interface includes the latest version software and extends performance for serious/professional users - offering the following benefits...

- Faster Downloading Times (up to FIVE times quicker)
- Improved animation speeds of up to 11fps (mono) and 3.5fps (colour)
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ProGrab™ supports any Amiga with Kickstart 2.04 or later & a minimum of 1.5Mb. free RAM.

✚ A video source cable will be required to match your own equipment set up - Ask for details.

Camcorder User commented... "If you're looking for a high resolution 24 bit digitiser then, at this price, ProGrab 24RT represents great value for money."

ProGrab™ - Voted as **The Best Video Hardware** product for the Amiga. This is especially pleasing because the award comes from the Amiga Shopper magazine's readers...

Our **Satisfied** Customers!

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ProGrab™ - Amiga Format **93% Gold Rating** and comments like "ProGrab 24RT Plus is quite simply the digitiser to get", "Incredible value for money - no other digitiser offers so much for so little", "Offers far more features than any other digitiser near the same price"

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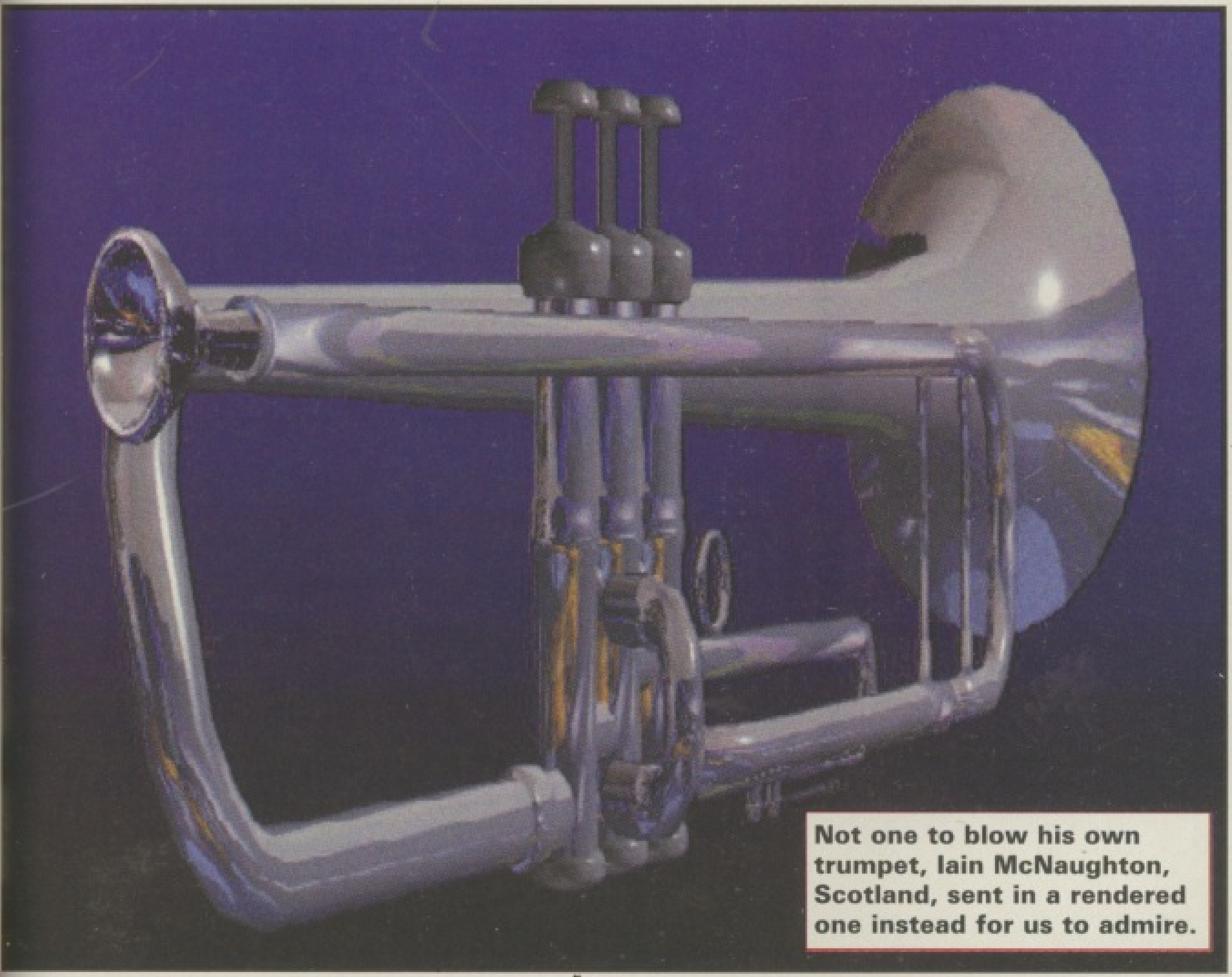
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Art Gallery

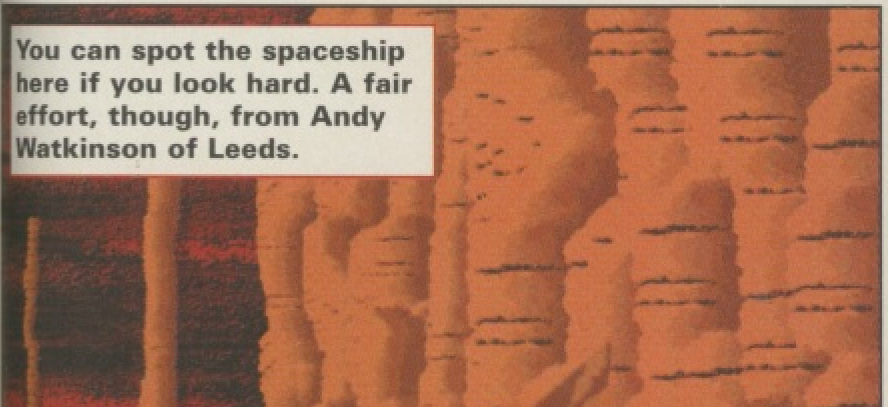
Lisa Collins desperately tries to get some culture into her by life by perusing this month's selection of readers' art.



Not one to blow his own trumpet, Iain McNaughton, Scotland, sent in a rendered one instead for us to admire.



Tweet, tweet, my lovely. This pair of birds was sent in by Stuart Le Grice from Essex. Polly want a cracker?



You can spot the spaceship here if you look hard. A fair effort, though, from Andy Watkinson of Leeds.

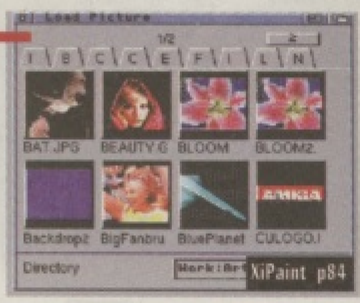


GV Nath, returns to these pages again. This time with an Email address:cm6700@ccub.wiv.ac.uk.

AMIGA workshop



Let the tutorials begin. And at this month's starting block we've got XiPaint, Imagine 3.0 and Scala MM300 all set to go the distance. As well as your regular helping of tutorials there's plenty of Net news and advice from our Comms experts. Plus we've got our usual selection of question and answer sessions, our points of view and our readers' opinions on all things Amiga. Read on.



XiPaint p84



Scala p90



Points of view p90

Regulars



PART 1

Last month's cover mounted XiPaint 3.2 is a powerful 24 bit paint and image processing package with plenty of neat features. This month we'll look at some of its best time saving tricks. Prepare to be amazed.

XiPaint 3.2

Thumbnail previews are a great time saver when you're loading and processing pictures. XiPaint uses its own customised file requester by default which has a built in mini preview system. This lets you view any picture without going through the more lengthy process of actually loading it up. To preview a picture, select its filename in the requester and then click on the box to the right of the directory listing. Depending on the size of the picture, its format and the speed of your Amiga, a small preview will appear instantly or within a few seconds. Repeat the process to preview any other images.

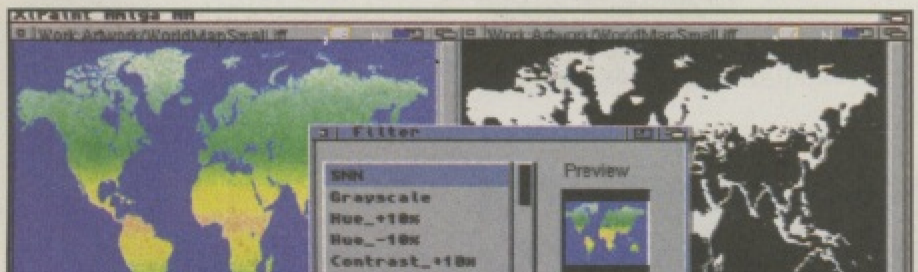
Whenever you preview a picture in this way XiPaint saves the small 'minipic' image in the current directory, using the original filename and adding a '.MPIC' extension. These small picture files are used if you request a preview of the same file in future, which is quicker than loading and scaling the whole image.

You can change the type of file requester from the Settings window. Click on the small arrow box at the top right of the window then select In/Out. From here you can choose the more familiar ASL-type requester (for which you will need the asl.library file in your Libs drawer) or the MiniPic requester. This uses the previously saved thumbnail pictures to give you a visual list of the directory.

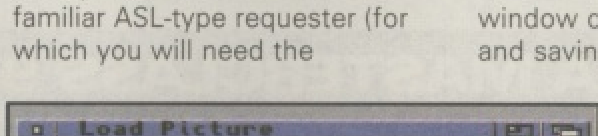
You can also use previews to give you an idea of how the image processing filters will affect your image without having to wait around for it to process the whole picture. Just click on any of the filters and the preview will appear.

In-out formats

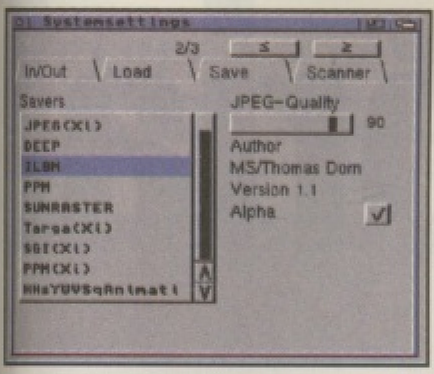
The second page of the Settings window deals with all the loading and saving options. There are a number of different loader modules which can be selected to import specific types of images. This will be set to Multipic_loader by default, an intelligent loader that will automatically recognise and load most common image formats. If an image won't load with this, try one of the others. The Save section allows you to define the format for your saved pictures. This is



▲ The filters section offers a good number of image processing effects. The preview window offers a quick indication of how the currently selected process will affect your picture.



▲ There are three types of requester for loading pictures, selected from the Settings window. This one combines a lister with small previews.



▲ Select your save format from the Settings window. ILBM and JPEG are generally recommended.

initially set to ILBM which will export 24-bit IFFs. Other formats including JPEG are also supported. If you encounter an empty list in this section, click the mouse over the lister and then drag it from top to bottom. You should then see the available savers appear.

Colour selection

Picking colours for painting can be done in one of a few ways, all of which are accessed from the Palette icon on the toolbox panel. The main palette works just as would expect with three sliders, one each for red, green and blue. These affect the colour currently selected in the palette below. Alternatively you can pick your colour from one of two charts. In many cases this is the quickest and easiest way to pick a specific colour rather than fiddling with the RGB sliders, although you won't find every possible shade is represented on these charts. To create a smooth graduation from one colour to another, click on the 'source' colour in the palette grid followed by the Shade button, then the 'destination' colour in the grid. The colours between will be automatically generated.



▲ Layer Manipulation is another of the unique features of XiPaint, offering plenty of possibilities for complex image composition. Try using more than three images for interesting results.

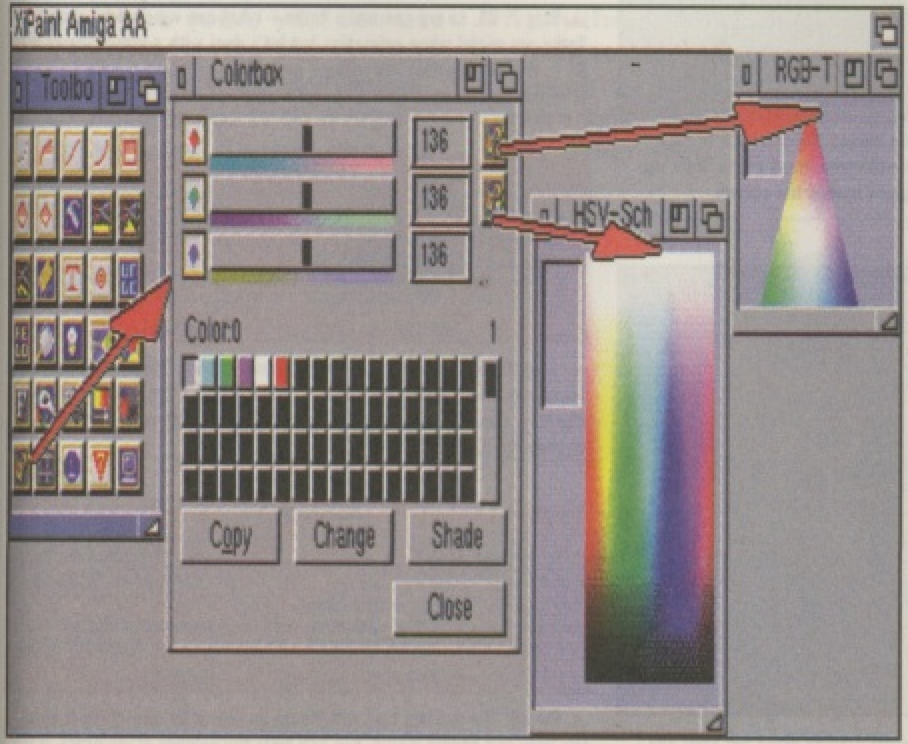
Image composition

XiPaint has some good tools for image composition, accessed from the Layer option on the Menus menu. This uses two or more images to generate a picture that's a combination of them all. Rather than simply fading all the images together, XiPaint takes specific information from each picture depending on its order in the Layer list.

The first in the list supplies the brightness levels while the second supplies the colours and saturation values.

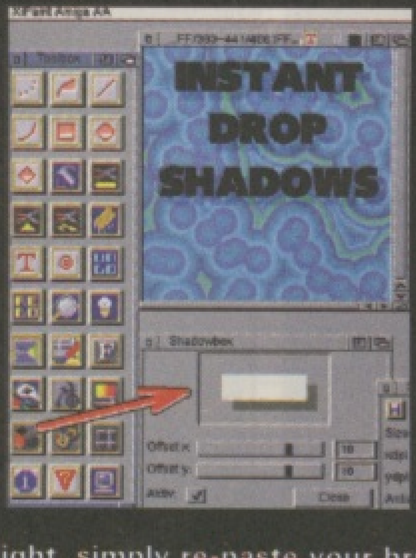
The third image will be combined with the result of the first two, usually resulting in parts of the third image showing through the darker areas of the intermediate composition. It all sounds a bit complicated but if you try experimenting with a number of different pictures, arranging them in different orders then it should become crystal clear exactly what does what. ■

Tony Horgan



▲ There's no shortage of colour selection controls in XiPaint. The main palette can be called up from the icon on the left, while subsequent RGB and HSV selectors can then be accessed for easy colour selection.

Instant drop shadows



You'll see the drop shadow icon on the toolbar – it's a little red pillar casting a shadow to the right. When this is switched on, a drop shadow will be cast by anything you add to your image, including freehand drawing and any brushes pasted down onto the image.

In this example the font and text tools have been used to generate three text brushes. These have then been pasted onto the backdrop image with a subtle drop shadow. If the initial shadow is too light, simply re-paste your brush in exactly the same position. The shadow is 'intelligent' in that is darkens the background pixels, rather than just over-writing them with a grey colour. Try changing the X and Y offset values to alter the distance between your subject and its shadow.

Imagine Tutorial

PART 7

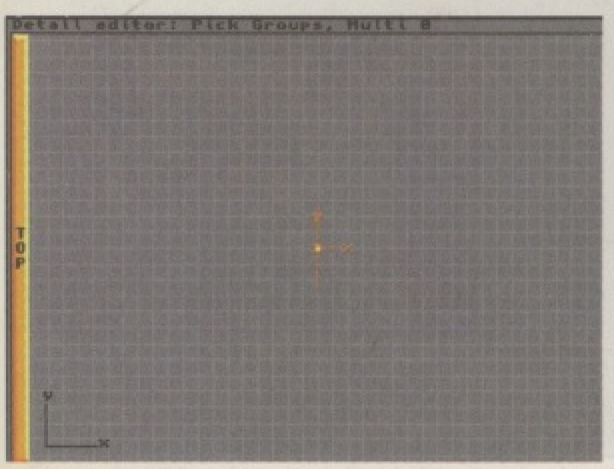
Tired of being lead up the garden path by Imagine? Take a shortcut with the CU Amiga Magazine guide to curves and orbits.

Imagine is a hugely powerful and complicated program and one of the features which takes some getting used to, which we'll be covering this issue, is the concept of 'Paths'. Paths are objects which are never rendered themselves but serve as a guide for more tangible objects.

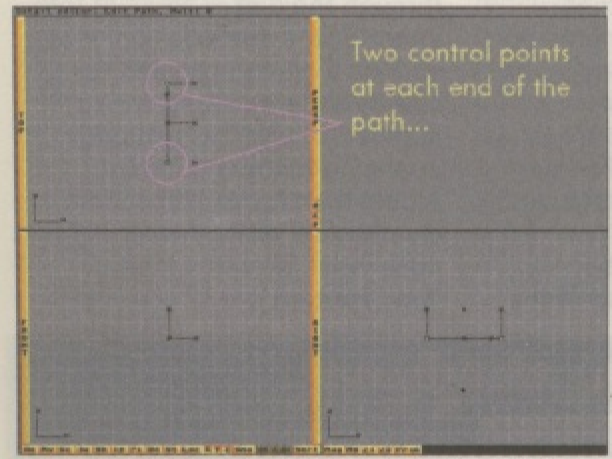
Imagine creates Paths as special curves called Splines, which means they are very smooth. They don't have to be 'curved' as such though because a straight line is really just a special case of a curve when you think about it.

There are several ways to make Spline Paths and once created they can be edited and used in several exciting ways. In this tutorial we'll be using Paths with the 'Grow' animation tool we neatly skipped last month. Before we get carried away with animations though, let's create some Paths. See steps 1-9 on this page for our step by step guide. ■

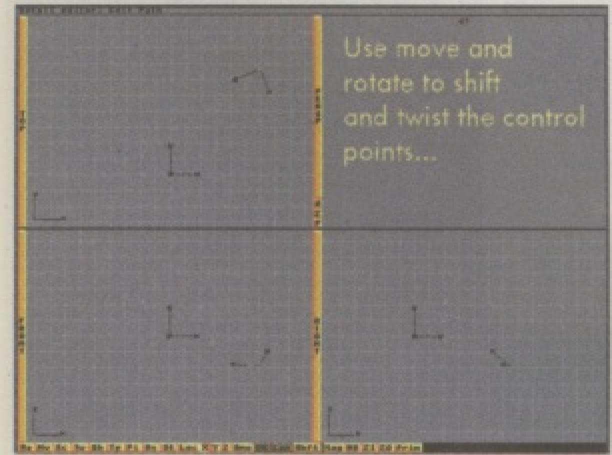
John Kennedy



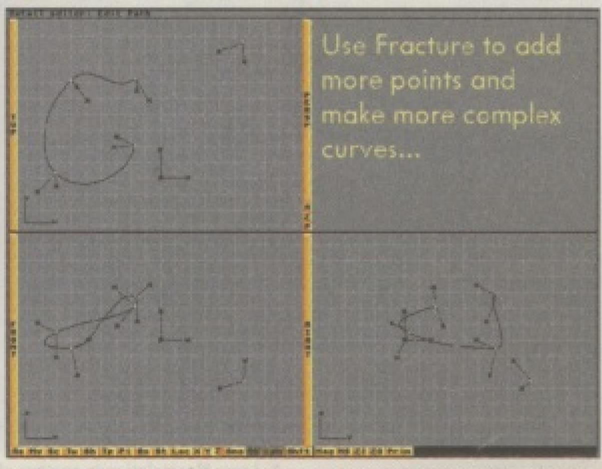
▲ **Step 1: Here's the first way to make a Path. From the Detail Editor select Object menu and Add. You should see two path options: Closed path and Open path. Choose Open for now and you'll see something as exciting as in the above picture.**



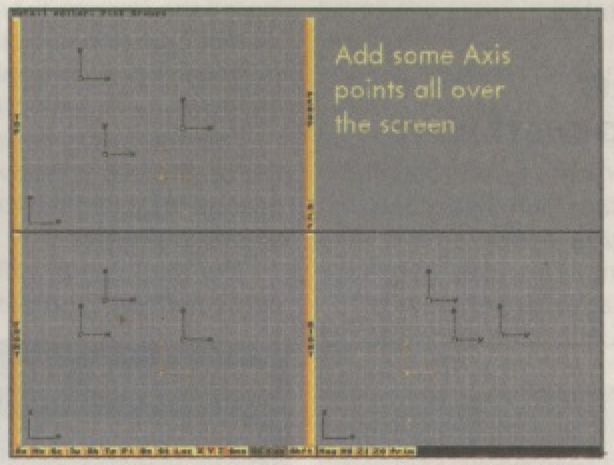
▲ **Step 2: So far our Path is rather dull. So to liven it up go to the Mode menu, select Edit Path and you'll see that the path actually has two control points. Alter these points and the Path changes too.**



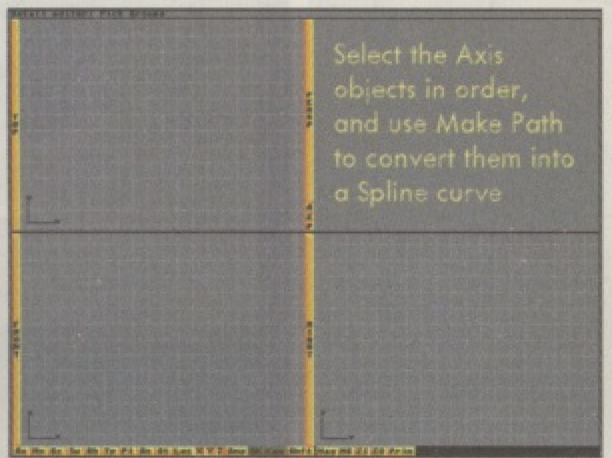
▲ **Step 3: Now the fun starts. Click on one of the control points and then use Move and Rotate to alter its position and orientation. You'll soon be able to create rather complicated curves ...**



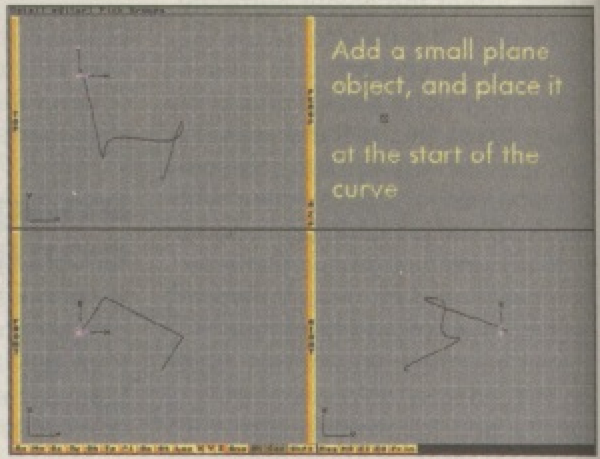
▲ **Step 4: Use the Fracture option, which you'll find in the Object menu, to add extra control points to the curve. Fracture will add an extra control point to the middle of the currently selected section. With more points, more complicated shapes are possible.**



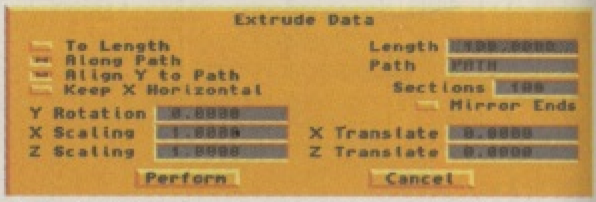
▲ **Step 5: Here is another way to make curves. Switch back to Pick Groups from the Mode menu and delete the monstrous curve. Now use Objects/Add to sprinkle some Axis objects around the screen.**



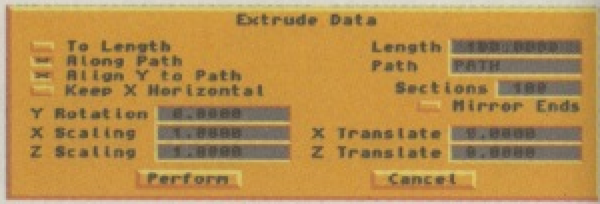
▲ **Step 6: Now, pick them in order whilst holding down the Shift key. Then pick 'Make Path' from the Object menu (or 'Make Closed Path') and the points will be replaced with a Spline curve path object.**



▲ **Step 7: OK, so we can make Paths – what can we do with them? Paths are useful when animating but let's deal with a static object first. Go to the Detail editor and make a path. Then create a simple primitive object, such as a plane with only one section a side.**



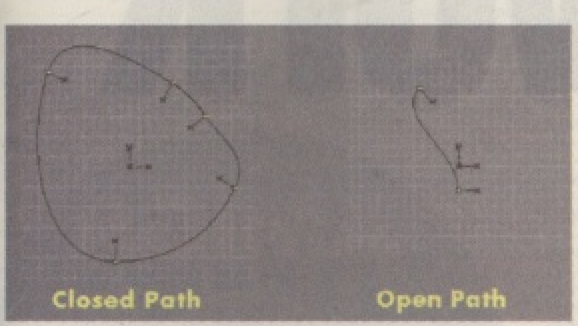
▲ **Step 8: With the plane object selected, choose 'Mold' from the Functions menu. Select 'Extrude' from the list and you'll see a requester like this. Copy these settings (if you made your path with Axis points, change the name 'PATH' to 'AXIS').**



▲ **Step 9: The extrude tool will create an object by stretching it along the path and adding a skin. You can alter the number of elements in the extrusion and this will produce varying results. You can also shrink and rotate the object for bizarre results ...**

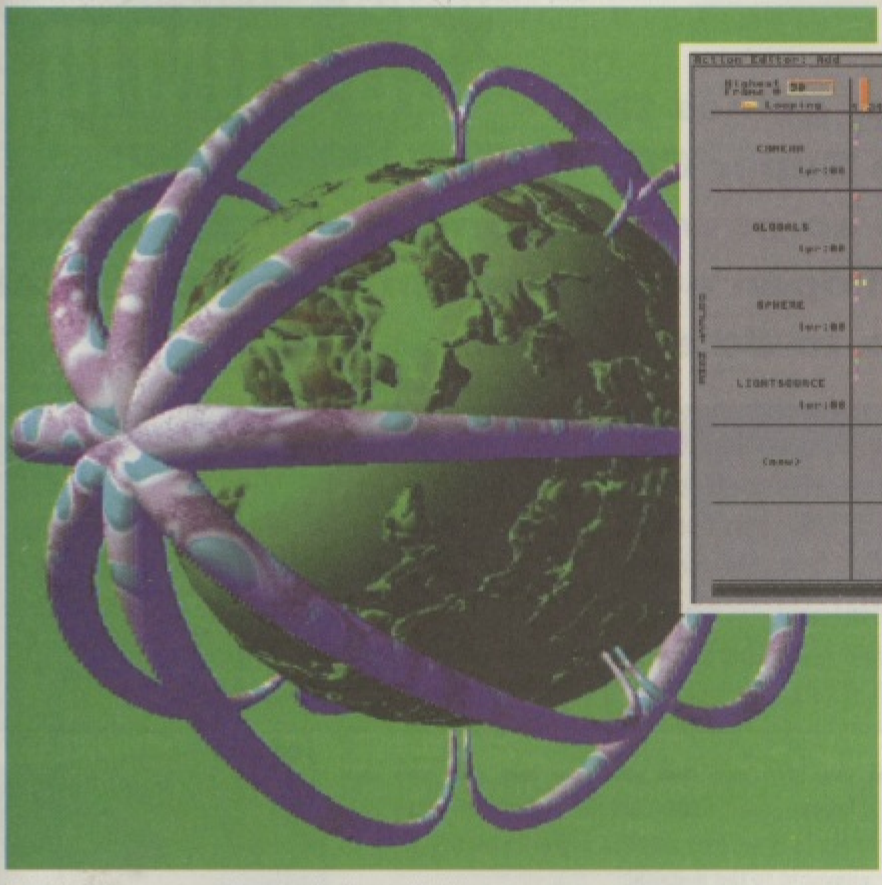
An open and closed case of effects

There are two types of Paths and both are extremely useful. An Open path has two ends which are not joined

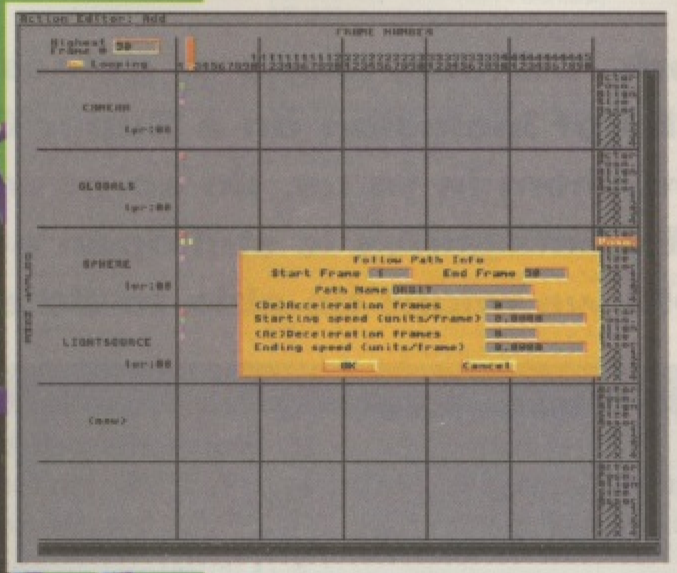


together. It can be used for an animation path or to describe the outline you want to create an object extrusion. A closed path has no beginning and no end. It's useful when you need to repeat an animation path: for example, you may want a moon to orbit a sun many times throughout the animation. Other options are available when defining how objects interact with Paths. One is 'Align Y to path' and this is very helpful. Imagine a toy racing car travelling around a race track. Think of the slots in the track as the path. The car will follow the track but the friction between its wheels and the track causes the car to rotate in a realistic manner. The car is always pointing in the direction it is travelling. This is what 'Align Y to path' achieves. Another option is 'Keep X horizontal' and this would stop an object from tilting from side to side as it follows the curves. Most of the time, you would not want this option on.

There's so many different paths to take



▲ Using Paths you can produce stunning images like this one.

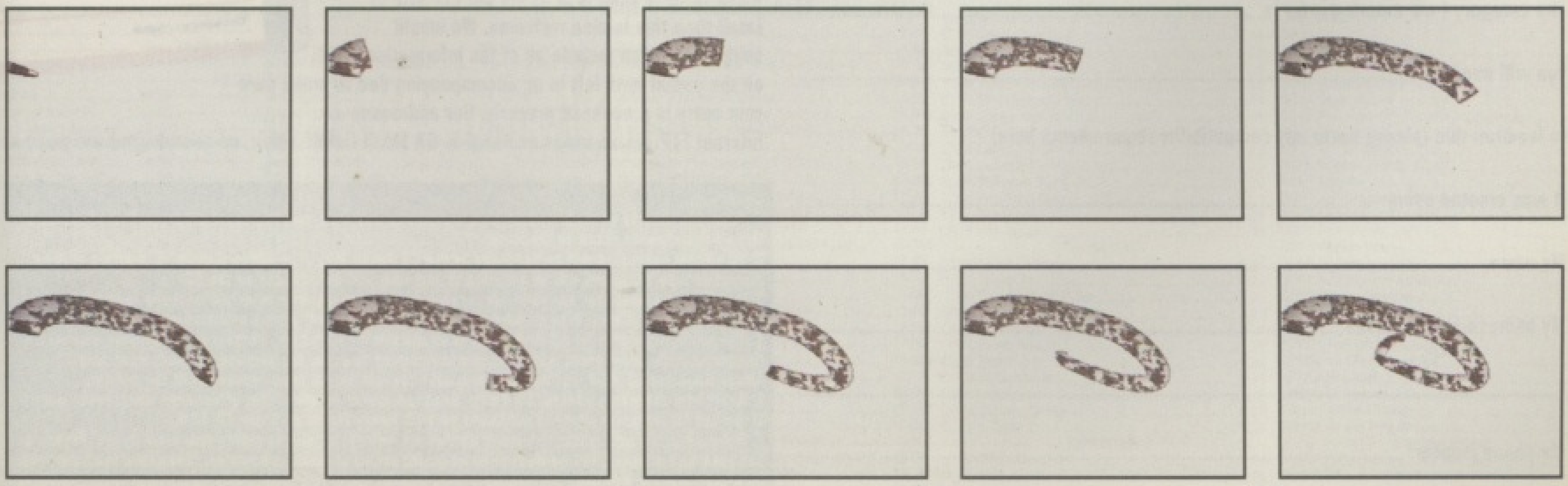


▲ You can add acceleration and deceleration factors to make an object either speed up or slow down.

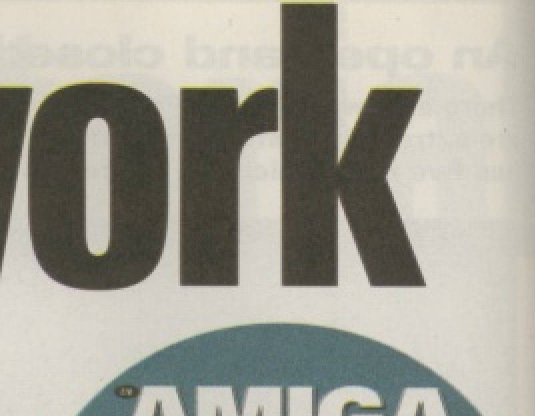
As we've seen, you can use a Path to guide the creation of an object, by providing an outline for it to propagate along. As you can see from the render, this can produce some lovely organic results which would be extremely difficult to create any other way.

Paths are also useful in animations. We examined last month how an object's start and end co-ordinates would create movement but it is also possible to make an object follow a path object. Create the path as before and save it. Load it into the Stage Editor with the objects you wish to animation. Now in the Action Editor, you can assign an Objects position to follow the Path. You can even add acceleration and deceleration factors to make the object speed up and slow down. Paths are the most accurate way to create animations and you should spend time working with them.

Finally, we get to the Grow special effect (see pictures at the bottom of the page). This works by extruding the object along the path over time: you can create an animation of the extrusion effect. All you have to do is create an object and a path. Select the path, then the object and group them with the Group menu option. Save them, and load them into the Stage editor for positioning. Now in the Action editor add the Grow effect over the number of frames you want, and hey presto your object will grow and extend in your animation. There's so much you can do!



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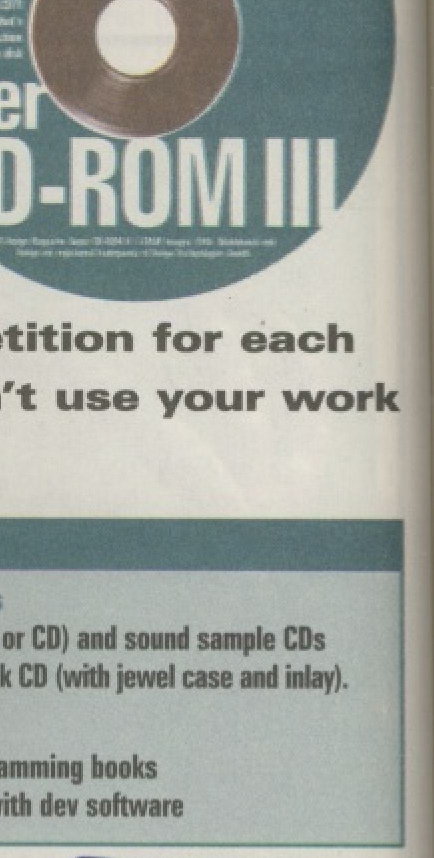
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Scala MM300

PART 3

Fancy making a cool million? You could be onto a winner with our Scala lottery predictor system.



▲ Here's the finished program in all it's glory. Don't forget to also create an eye catching animation to put at the beg inning.

There's a lot more to Scala than simple video tilting. This month's final tutorial combines interactive pages with some basic programming scripts to create a simple to use lottery 'prediction' system which could, for example, be used in a lottery outlet as an aid to increase sales.

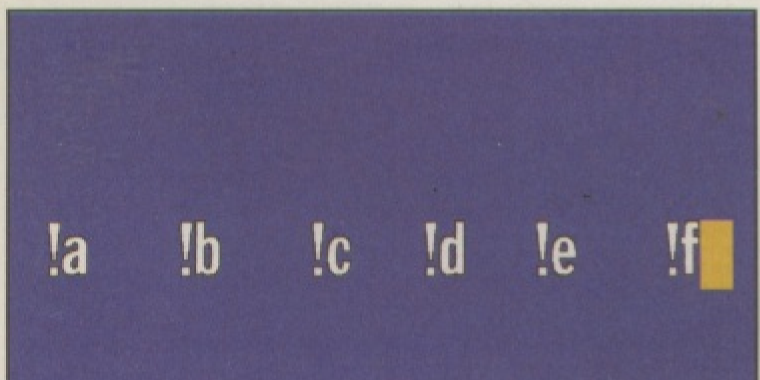
To keep things simple, our lottery predictor will be controlled by a single mouse click. This will enable us to keep the Amiga away from prying hands and we can replace the mouse with a single momentary push switch (which could easily be wired up to simulate a mouse click). All the customer will see is a monitor with a single push button: so easy even your oldest, non compos mentis relative could use it.

Valuable variables

First of all we need to set up the parts behind the scenes which will generate the numbers. For this we need to bring the Variables column into view by dragging the Pagename and Wipe columns to the left.

We are going to create six variables to hold our six randomly chosen numbers, so check to make sure that all the numbers are different, and then display them on screen. You could use a similar system to pick the balls for bingo (as the astute among you will have already realised) and with the Amiga's multimedia capabilities you could even have the computer call the numbers out for you.

Because I can't think of anything more thrilling I'm going to call the six variables a, b, c, d, e and f. While single letter variables are not ideal, they will make things easier when we display them later on. Select the first Variable button and on the Set line enter Line 1 in Figure 1. Select OK, and change the Pagename from Untitled to Set-a by clicking on the No column. Set the Pause to 0 and we have finished our first variable. Because we have not loaded a background there is nothing to see at this stage.



▲ Each of these variables will be replaced by a random number when the script is run. It's not looking very appealing a t the moment but wait until we create a background, see the picture top right to see what I mean.

The pod people

OK we're not about to start churning out homemade clones but duplicates come in handy with Scala. For our next step we need to set variable b. I find the best way is to select the No column and duplicate Set-a, renaming the Pagename to Set-b. We will then have the variable line already set for us, all we need to do is change the a to b. At this point we have set two variables which will contain a random number between 1 and 49. What we now need is a method of ensuring both variables contain different numbers. The easiest way to do this is to compare the numbers and if they are the same we regenerate a second number. We do this by entering an If and Goto line so that the Variable requester for Set-b now reads the same as Line 2 in Figure 1.

This now ensures that if b happens to be the same as a, then a new random number is generated. I would suggest you also change the 999 (the 'random seed') in each line to add another element of randomness into the calculations.

Do exactly the same for variables c, d, e and f. However, you will need to add extra If statements (by clicking on the arrow at the end of the If button) so that c has two (c=a, c=b), d has three (d=a, d=b, d=c) and so on. Also make sure that the Goto command points back to the same line number that you are working on.

In working order

To check if the variables are working properly load a background page (a plain one will do for now). Variables are displayed by typing !variable, so we need to type our variables: !a, !b, !c, !d, !e, !f, making sure to press Return after each one.

Set the Pause on this page to Mouse, and save the script. You can now press Play to check everything is working all right. Hopefully you should have six different numbers on screen. Press the right mouse button

Figure 1

```
a=RANDOM(1,49,(RANDOM(1,999,TIME('S'))))

Set:b=RANDOM(1,49,(RANDOM(1,999,TIME('S')))) If:b=a Goto:Set-b
```

Get around easily with some shortcuts

Try these lot in Edit Menu for size.

F1, F2 - Go to previous/next page.

F3 - Save the page and create another with the same background.

F4 - Save the page and create a duplicate.

F5 - Inset a blank line.

F10 - Redraw the text. RtAmiga+k - Toggles upper/lower case.

RtAmiga+x - Cut line RtAmiga+c - Copy line RtAmiga+p - Paste line

Escape - Stop the script.

Shift+Escape - Stop script and edit the page.

(number)+Return - Jump to page (number).

and they should change, don't worry if this takes a few seconds.

If you run into problems compare your script with my basic script (Figure 2) to see where the fault lies. Because Scala's scripts are straightforward ASCII text files you could also type my script in, using a text processor, and load the script into Scala.

Frills and ruffles

What you now need to do is create an attractive background image on which to display the numbers and an animation to go at the front of our presentation to attract and draw the punters in. These graphics are going to make the difference between a clever but bland production and a swish eye-grabbing presentation.

Once those are created, replace the plain background in our Display Numbers page with the new image. The easiest way to do this is using the Load Other Background option in the Edit Menu, as it will retain the variables you have typed on screen. Then load the animation putting it as the first page.

Now modify the Pause on the Display Numbers page to 60 seconds. This gives sufficient time for someone to write down the numbers before continuing. Set the Number of Rotation of the animation to infinity and set the Pause time to Mouse click.

Find a couple of jingles to play while the animation and numbers are displayed and our production is ready. The animation should encourage people to press the button and generate their six lucky numbers. After sixty seconds or a second press of the button the presentation moves back to playing the animation.

That's it for our tutorial series on Scala. I hope you've enjoyed them and have gotten the best out of Scala. Keep practising. ■

Norman Harris

Figure 2

Stick to this script and you'll be OK

Save the following script as an ASCII file and you can load it directly into Scala.

```
CygnusEd Professional V3.5 Copyright © 1987-1993 CygnusSoft Software
Work:ImportantCopy/ScalaFinal/SCALA.TXT        I     line 62     col 1
V3.0
MOUSE on
EVENT Set-a
SET a RANDOM(1,49,(RANDOM(1,999,TIME('S'))))
END
EVENT Set-b
SET b RANDOM(1,49,(RANDOM(1,699,TIME('S'))))
IF b=a GOTO Set-b
END
EVENT Set-c
SET c RANDOM(1,49,(RANDOM(1,876,TIME('S'))))
IF c=a GOTO Set-c
IF c=b GOTO Set-c
END
EVENT Set-d
SET d RANDOM(1,49,(RANDOM(1,987,TIME('S'))))
IF d=a GOTO Set-d
IF d=b GOTO Set-d
IF d=c GOTO Set-d
END
EVENT Set-e
SET e RANDOM(1,49,(RANDOM(1,666,TIME('S'))))
Work:ImportantCopy/ScalaFinal/SCALA.TXT        I     line 89     col 1
EVENT Set-e
SET e RANDOM(1,49,(RANDOM(1,666,TIME('S'))))
IF e=a GOTO Set-e
IF e=b GOTO Set-e
IF e=c GOTO Set-e
IF e=d GOTO Set-e
END
EVENT Set-f
SET f RANDOM(1,49,(RANDOM(1,777,TIME('S'))))
IF f=a GOTO Set-f
IF f=b GOTO Set-f
IF f=c GOTO Set-f
IF f=d GOTO Set-f
IF f=e GOTO Set-f
END
EVENT "Display Numbers"
BLANK 640 512 2 lace hires 0
TABS 100 200 300 400 500
MARGINS on 32 607
PALETTE 030 fff 000 fb0
FONT FranklinC.font 58
COLOR 1 2 2 2 2 0 1 2 0 1 1 1 2 2 1
ATTRIBUTES edge remap
STYLE 0 3 4 3 6 1 1 58 7 2 13 0 2 0 1 0 4 4 7
TEXTWIPE cccut speed 6
TEXT 32 176 "!a"
TEXT 144 176 "!b"
TEXT 256 176 "!c"
TEXT 352 176 "!d"
TEXT 448 176 "!e"
TEXT 560 176 "!f"
PAUSE -1
END
****** BOX OUT ***********
Useful Scala Shortcuts
Edit Menu
F1, F2 - Go to previous/next page.
F3 - Save the page and create another with the same background.
```



▲ Make sure the Goto points back to the line you are working on.

Wired World

PART 13

A picture paints a thousand words but HTML can create a whole lot more: pictures, text - all you need to get your home page looking pretty.



Last month we created some basic HTML for our WWW 'home page'. Now to expand it. This should be beneficial especially to those readers that signed up to the Internet FCI deal on the June issue of CU Amiga Magazine and got 512K of free web space. Before we continue, we need a rough outline of what HTML is and how it works. There's numerous HTML helpers available but in this tutorial we'll be learning how HTML actually works so all you'll need is a text editor and a web browser.

Pointy brackets

An HTML, Hyper-Text Markup Language, document is nothing more than a straight ASCII text file with some embedded codes. These codes are encased in pointy brackets '<>'. Standard procedure is to specify first one <tag> and then turn it off with a </tag> action. This only applies to tags which affect a browser's behaviour after the tag. Some tags, however, are stand alone and don't need to be terminated. Problems will quickly arise if we forget to turn a tag off which needs to be terminated.

Each HTML page starts with the lone tag <HTML> to signify that this isn't just a plain text document. Most browsers will display a text file in a non-proportional font if they don't find this special header. In keeping with the HTML termination rule, at the very end of the document, there will be a </HTML> tag.

Next, we have to specify the header of the HTML document which in the simplest case contains the title of the document. This means, so far, we'd have something like this;

```
<HTML>
<HEAD>
<TITLE>The name of this
page</TITLE>
</HEAD>
```

It's essential that each page has a <HEAD> and a <TITLE> otherwise the browsers will not know what to call the document. Note that HTML isn't fussy about how you terminate your tags or word-wrap your text though as a rule HTML tags must not be word-wrapped themselves. You can start a tag on one line, put your text on the next and then terminate it on the following or you can put it all in one line as with the title line above.

HTML body

The next step is to specify that the body of the HTML document follows the head and title. Here we only need a <BODY> tag which will be terminated after the body later on. It's worth noting that several of the so-called HTML standards are not actually HTML standards but are extensions added by the industry dominant (not standard) Web browser, Netscape. These are often known as N-HTML tags or even HTML3 which is not strictly speaking correct since the HTML3 draft was recently rejected by the powers that be (drop in to http://www.w3.org for the latest news on this).

There are, however, some very useful N-HTML/HTML3 'attributes' which can make your pages look much better if viewed with a browser compliant with these extensions. For example, we can set the colour of the background and text. We can even load in a background image, either a large bitmap for the entire screen or more usually a tiled image which is small repeatable pattern which makes an attractive background. These attributes are embedded in the <BODY> tag as follows;

```
<BODY TEXT=#rrggbb BGCOLOUR=#rrgg-
bb BACKGROUND=picture.gif>
```

Hexadecimal colours

Note the pairs of 'rr' 'gg' and 'bb' for TEXT and BGCOLOUR. These are hexadecimal values which make up a colour by specifying the Red, Green and Blue components. For example, Red text on a green background would be; TEXT =#ff0000 BGCOLOUR=#00ff00. The BACKGROUND attribute points to a picture file on the local storage. This contains path information to the file and will be case sensitive so as a general rule of thumb, so never use upper case file names so as to avoid problems. We're using upper case tags here, this isn't necessary but we recommend it as it makes HTML easier to follow.

Now that we're safely in the body of our HTML document, any stray text which isn't an HTML tag will be seen on screen. We'll just make a quick heading to round off the HTML document. To do this, we must use the <Hx> tag where x is a number from 1 to 6. In theory this is supposed to be the order of importance of the heading but in reality it just sets the font size with 1 being the largest. Try the following;

```
<H3>Our very own HTML
document!</H3>
<H6>But there isn't much here right
now...</H6>
```

Each heading starts with a <Hx> tag and



▲ We can create customised backgrounds with N-HTML/HTML3 attributes. Here's one I made earlier. Can you guess how I feel about MUI? It's not hard if you look very closely.

terminates with the same tag. You must ensure that each font size is correctly terminated as some browsers will simply ignore any further commands if you don't. It's also customary to have a section of the document called the Address segment. Here the author with the official title of the 'Webmaster', which is you, has his/her address included. We also have to terminate the <ADDRESS> segment followed by the <BODY> since we've finished and also the entire document with a </HTML>. Our example would go like so;

```
<ADDRESS>
<HR>
<H4>Joe Bloggs, Webmaster -
joe@bloggs.com</H4>
</ADDRESS>
</BODY>
</HTML>
```

That's it! Save this document out from your text editor with any filename , though again I recommend lower case, with an extension of .html on the end, 'test.html' would be good. You can now load this into your Web browser to view your handiwork. Every Web browser has a load local file option somewhere. InternetFCI/CU Amiga offer users can use the Windows/Open Local File option from the menu of Voyager. Select your HTML document in the file requester and it should be displayed with the correct title, heading, body and address. So long as you have the basic framework as created here, you can now make your changes and check in your browser by simply clicking on the reload gadget when changes are made.

You should actually reload this document every time you want to create a new page so you have the framework already. Don't forget to replace the title with the new page's title and delete everything between the <BODY> tag and the <ADDRESS> tag as this will be the segment that changes from page to page.

Adding pictures

Next we'll look at doing the really neat things that the Web was designed to do like including pictures. First off, we recommend that you obtain an art package of some description which will allow you to save our your own pictures in GIF format. This (and Jpeg) is the common format used on the Web unless you only want your pages to work with Amigas. Never use IFF HAMs as they wont be displayed properly even on Amigas.

Let's look at how you use pictures in an HTML document. We need to use the <IMG> tag with the embedded attributes stating some essential information such as where to find the picture. The simplest example would be; <IMG SRC=pic.gif>. The SRC attribute sets the path and filename of the picture which naturally must be present on the web server having been uploaded by use following the method used last month. Again don't forget it's case sensitive. Your Amiga might load case mismatches just fine but your provider's web server will not.

Processing

The subject of processing pictures for WWW and HTML use is a complex one. The graphics aspects are looked at in this month's Graphics Masterclass which is essential reading so check it out as soon as you start making your own pictures for your HTML documents. As far as the HTML aspects of handling pictures, it's time to look at some import attributes including commonly used N-HTML extensions. The first is WIDTH and HEIGHT. These are by no means essential but when the page is viewed by IBrowse on the Amiga or Netscape on the PC, these values take on a new meaning. When the HTML document is loaded, the picture dimensions are pre-specified. This means that the browser can draw a box the exact size of the picture before the picture is actually downloaded.

The reason for this behaviour is so that you see the document as it was intended almost instantly. Browsers which don't do this have to layout the entire text again re-wrapping it when the pictures are available. For this reason I highly recommend that you specify these attributes in your IMG tags each and every time you use a picture (except for the BODY background attribute). Also, say we want to have the text on the right-hand side of a picture (sized 50 x 30 pixels) as if to caption the picture. Check **Figure 1** for an example.

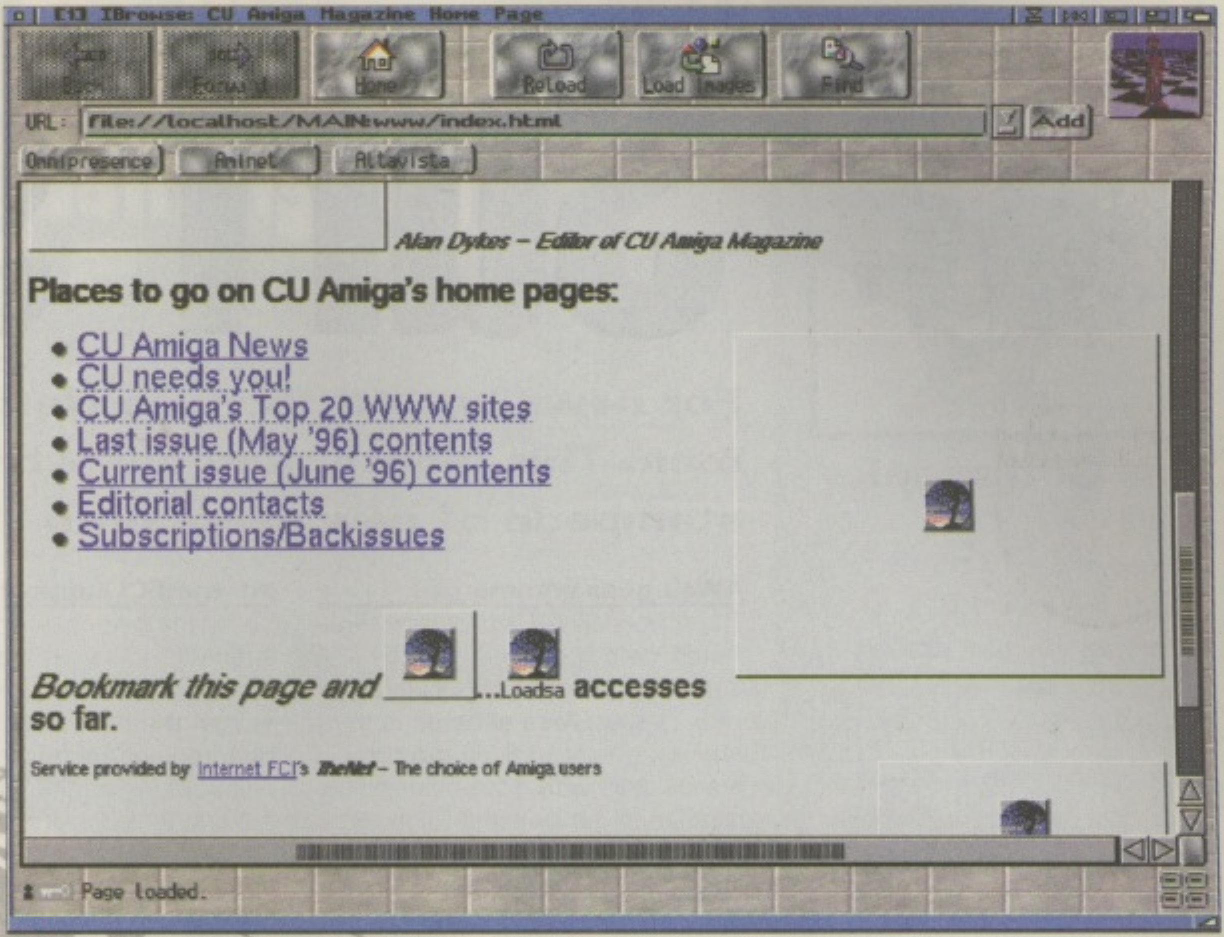
In figure 1, as soon as the Netscape compliant browser loads the document, a box of size 50 x 30 will be drawn with the text 'here's a caption' on the right of the box on the bottom. The
 tag on the end is a special tag which forces a BReak. Remember that as you'll need it all the time. The ALIGN attribute in the picture tells the browser to align the following text on the bottom (defaults to right) of the picture. The browser will later load the picture and fill the box in. If you don't use these size tags, the browsers will either re-layout the text (which looks ugly) or wait until it loads all the pictures so it knows what the dimensions are.

Next month, we'll be taking an in-depth look at the special tags and attributes to control how the text is laid out in the HTML documents. We'll also look into the most powerful aspect of HTML, the link functions. In the meantime, why not save out the source of your favourite pages on the Web from your browser and see how they achieve those wonderful effects. ■

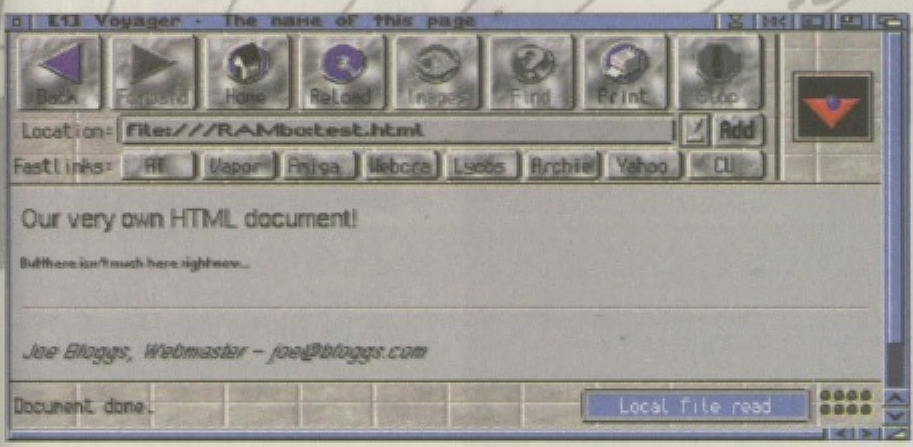
Mat Bettinson

Figure 1

```
<IMG WIDTH=50 HEIGHT=30 ALIGN=bottom SRC=mypic.gif>
Here's a caption.<BR>
```



▲ CU Amiga Magazine's home pages: where everything is laid out in a nice easy to get around format. Have you paid a visit to our site yet? If not, why not? Get there fast otherwise you're missing out.



▲ Here's our test page and it's looking good so far, don't you think? Notice the head and the body copy, this is what you should see if you follow the examples in this tutorial.



Surf's up!

For news hot off the web Netgod is your man. This month, find out what's been causing a stampede of new users onto the Net.

Net God speaks

Good news! The stampede of Amiga users joining the Internet via the June issue CU Amiga /Internet FCI special offer continues. This glut of Net newcomers will have several beneficial spin-offs for us all, even comms veterans. For a start some of these new users are skilled programmers and may turn their hand to sculpting yet more quality Net software. Since this will lead to an increase in the market, existing authors may also be more enthusiastic about creating new products as the potential sales base is higher. Maybe Team 17 will even give us network Worms some time soon? With some seriously tasty Comms CDs and new TCP/IP stacks around the corner, things are looking rosy on the comms front. So, if you bump into one of the new the net.co.uk users, please help with any problems they might have. A reworked Net software installer will be included on next month's CUCD-III for any stragglers who haven't signed up yet. I'm one happy Netgod.

AWeb goes commercial

The AWeb WWW browser by the Dutch Yvon Rozijn, has already attained a fair level of popularity with its shareware releases to the Aminet. Now it's taking the commercial leap with distribution to be handled by AmiTrix, the Canadian developer/distributor responsible for the AmigaLink system.

The AWeb-II package will include AWeb 2.0 with support for background images, localisation, icons, background/text colours, image borders and centering and limited frame support. More HTML 3.2 tags are promised soon.

In addition to AWeb, the package will feature the HTML-Heaven 2.0 Web creation package which will use AWeb as a WYSIWIG display of the HTML in progress. Mail and FTP plug-ins for AWeb will also be bundled. Apparently free support will also be on offer with a free upgrade planned once the 3.2 features have been completed.

The RRP amounts to $45.00US or around £30. Email AmiTrix at sales@amitrix.com or check out their home page at http://www.networkx.com/amitrix/index.html

InternetFCI support

So far the response from the InternetFCI 'the net' package deal offered in the June issue of CU Amiga has been outstanding. Hundreds of Amiga users have been getting on the Internet for the first time.

Most newcomers have had little or no problems but some have experienced difficulty with the software on their particular Amiga configuration. So, we've set up a support mailing list for InternetFCI Amiga users. To join up, simply send an Email to listserv@cu-amiga.co.uk with the following line in the body of the Email;

```
subscribe amigafci
```

You can then Email problems and even help fellow Amigans on the net by responding to messages on the mailing list or writing an Email to amigafci@cu-amiga.co.uk. Support and software upgrades will be notified via this mailing list so it's essential that you get on.

If you haven't taken up InternetFCI on the three months for £20 trial-offer then call them on 0500-267767 to find out more.

The biggest and the best

It's official: the Aminet FTP archive is now the largest FTP site in the world. It has hit 30,000 files beating the previous recordholder of 29,000 files (the PC SimTel site) making it the largest FTP archive!

Aminet started officially in January 1992 when Urban Mueller took over a small archive a student club ran on an A3000 donated by Commodore Switzerland. With 40 users per day being the norm, Urban wrote the programs that handled the .readme files which are the Aminet's trademark to this day. Four and a half years later, the Aminet's home site has moved from Switzerland to the US with now more than 30 mirrors around the world.

The 5 Gigabytes of Amiga specific freely redistributable files is an invaluable resource. Recent uploads are regularly published on the popular Aminet CDs available through most PD Houses.

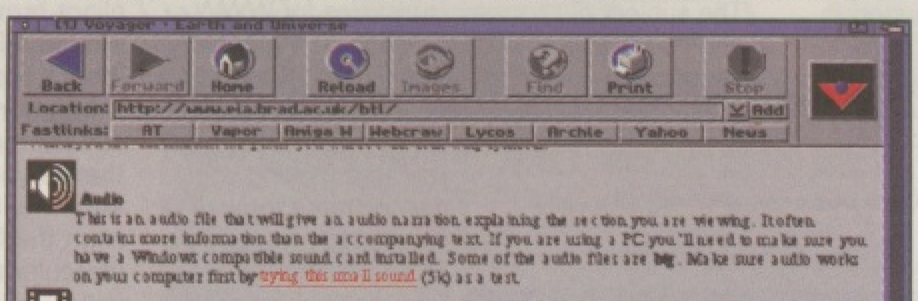
For details of a local Aminet mirror contact http://www. aminet.org.

All wired up

Eyetech are working on a port of CUSeeMe which they intend to bundle with the Microdeal VideoMaster A1200 PCMCIA video grabber/sound sampler.

Using this software and the VideoMaster hardware will allow real-time video and audio links to be performed over the Internet with a suitable video source. The VideoMaster has no trouble in sampling audio at the same time as grabbing small screen monochrome video so it would seem ideal for the task.

The VideoMaster hardware retails for £69.95 while a B&W video camera with microphone, PSU and cables costs £169.95. For more information contact Eyetech on 01642713185 or Email eyetech@cix.compulink.co.uk. ■



▲ The WWW is home to many weird, wonderful and very useful sites. The one shown above is a site all about stars and galaxies. You can contact them on http//www.eia.brad.ac.u/btl/

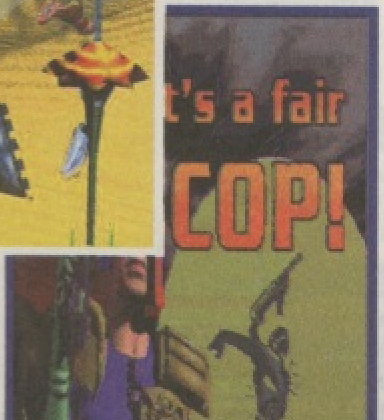
It's BIG! It's BRILLIANT! It's ... Super



















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Masterclass

For our last scheduled look at ARexx for a while (stop cheering at the back of the class!) it'd be a good idea for us to examine the various ways of testing and debugging programs and scripts.

Some of the best programmers in the world write programs with bugs in them: even me. It's extremely dangerous to pronounce a program is 100% bug free. The knack is to reduce the number and severity of the bugs to acceptable levels. Thankfully, ARexx is a forgiving and flexible language and will make a good stab at pointing out any of your most commonly occurring mistakes.

ARexx also includes some excellent debugging tools for really getting to grips with your programs and killing the bugs. Hey! Did this language really come free with my Amiga? It does so much ...

Same mistakes every time

Prevention is always better than cure so it's worthwhile looking at the most common mistakes upfront rather than trying to debug them after they have been typed in.

Here's some examples of a few common mistakes:

1. Forgetting to start RexxMast.

If RexxMast isn't present, then ARexx scripts cannot be run. Make sure you have copied it from your Workbench Extras disk.

2. Trying to run a script with the wrong name.

You can run an ARexx script from the Shell with the 'RX' command. RX must be followed by the full name of the program, although if the program name ends in '.REXX' you can leave this part out.

If no matter what you type to start the ARexx program, it keeps returning 'Program Not Found' it could be because you have left out the comment at the start of the program. All ARexx programs must begin with /* and */ at the very start.

Sometimes ARexx seems to totally ignore commands in the script. For example, although Arexx uses the command 'SAY' to display text you might accidentally use 'PRINT' instead. ARexx will simply ignore this.

However, if you use 'ECHO' it will work. What's going on? If you use PRINT ARexx thinks you are using a command from another Host. Unless you happen to have a program called 'print.rexx' present, nothing will happen. However, when you use ECHO text is displayed, because by default ARexx will let AmigaDOS have a bash at recognising commands and of course ECHO is a valid AmigaDOS command.

All the commands following an IF/THEN clause are not executed. Let's say you are testing a variable and want ARexx to perform some actions, like this:

```
IF score>highscore THEN
     SAY "New high score!"
     highscore=score
```

Can you spot the bug? After a THEN, only one statement will be executed which means the statement 'highscore=score' will always be executed. The correct form is:

```
IF score>highscore THEN
     DO
        SAY "New high score!"
        highscore=score
     END
```

as this packets up the statements into one DO clause.

Just one little arithmetic error

Keep getting those nasty little 'Arithmetic Conversion errors'? This program may look OK at first glance however it will crash out with the arithmetic error.

```
/* Whoops!*/

x=y+10
say x
```

The problem is that by default all variables are defined to contain their own name. This means that the variable Y does not contain a number (you might expect the value '0') and instead contains the string 'Y'. When you try and add a string to a number you get an error. Do it this way instead:

```
/* Better! */

y=0
x=y+10
say x
```

Other sorts of errors can be harder to detect. For example, your script may contain a 'logic error' in that your code is perfect, but what if your reasoning is flawed?

The program is not bugged as such, you are! ARexx still makes it easier to find these flaws too, as we'll see.

Stamping out those bugs!

A good way to find out what your program is currently up to is to include 'SAY' commands at various points in the program.

For example, if your program is quite large and uses a lot of functions, it might be a good idea to include SAY at the beginning and end of each function.

You can use the SAY command simply to indicate which part of the program is actually executing, or you can use SAY to display the current value of a variable.

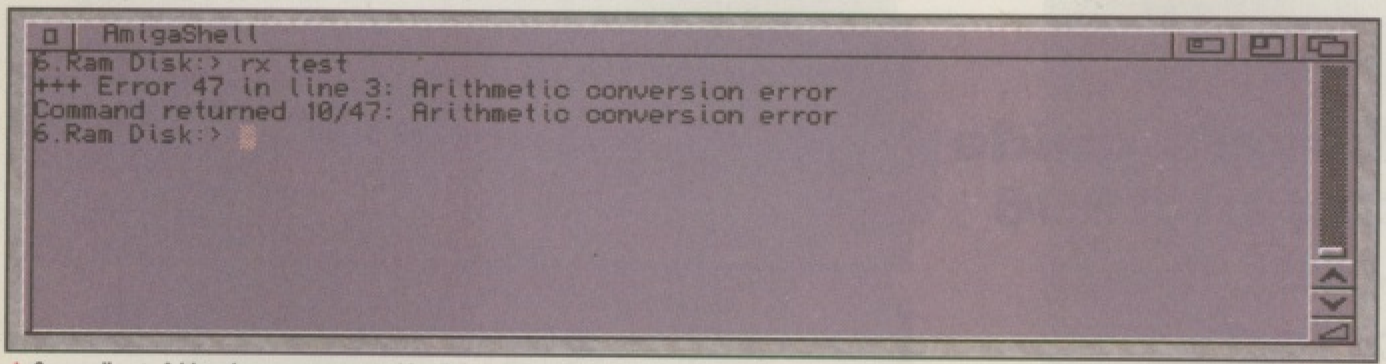
It can also be a good idea to make the SAY conditional, so that you can switch the message on and off:

```
if debug=1 then say "Function
Zog Started"
```

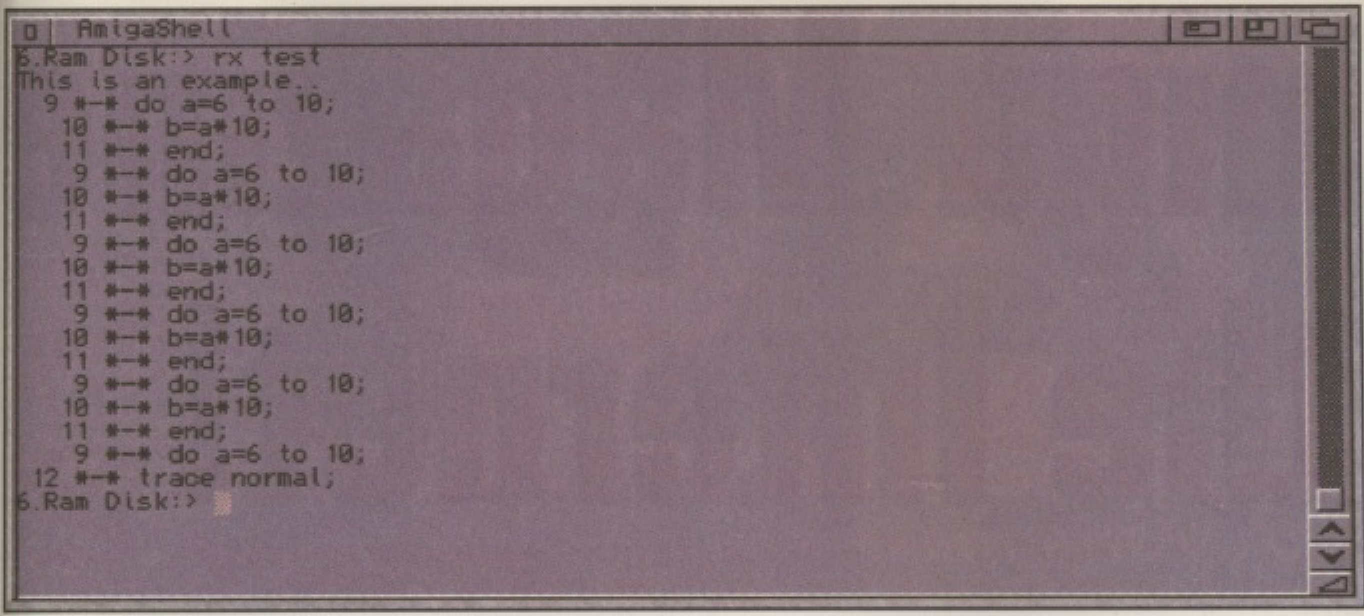
You can control the printing of messages by setting 'debug' to 1 or 0 at the start of the script.

However, this is nothing new and in fact ARexx can do it pretty much automatically, thanks to the TRACE command.

At any point in your program you can include the line TRACE ALL to switch on special trace output and then TRACE NORMAL to switch it back on, like the example on the following page:



▲ Say goodbye to Arithmetic error messages with a little help from Arexx.



▲ Let ARexx show you what's happening with the Trace command.

```
/* Tracing Example */
say "This is an example.."
do a=1 to 5
     b=a*10
end

trace all
do a=6 to 10
     b=a*10
end
trace normal
```

This creates output like this:

```
This is an example..
 9 *-* do a=6 to 10;
  10 *-* b=a*10;
  11 *-* end;
   9 *-* do a=6 to 10;
  10 *-* b=a*10;
  11 *-* end;
   9 *-* do a=6 to 10;
  10 *-* b=a*10;
  11 *-* end;
   9 *-* do a=6 to 10;
  10 *-* b=a*10;
  11 *-* end;
   9 *-* do a=6 to 10;
  10 *-* b=a*10;
  11 *-* end;
   9 *-* do a=6 to 10;
 12 *-* trace normal;
```

Up until the Trace command, nothing happens. However, after it the display will contain the line number of the script, followed by the statement currently being executed. This allows you to see which lines in your program are being processed. Remember, if the text whizzes off your screen too quickly to read you can redirect it. For example, if the program is called 'plop.rexx', run it like this:

```
rx plop > ram:debug
```

This will send the output of the program to a file called 'debug' in the RAM disk where you can peruse it at your leisure.

Incidentally, you can use TRACE with several options instead of FULL such as 'RESULTS', which will also display the value of any expressions calculated. Use 'INTERMEDIATE' if you want a lot of extra information too. Sometimes these debugging methods can be confusing, especially if your program already prints to the screen. For this reason, ARexx can open a new window especially for trace output. All you have to do is enter

```
TCO
```

at the shell. This stands for 'Trace Console Open' and it will open a new window. This window will display all the output generated by TRACE. You also can close the window by entering

```
TCC
```

which stands for 'Trace Console Close'. If asked nicely, ARexx will open up a new window for the display of all trace output.

If you want to be able to control how the trace operates whilst the program is running, use another TRACE option such as this:

```
trace ?all
```

which puts the Trace into a special interactive mode. Now the program will halt after every command with a prompt. You can either continue to the next instruction by pressing return, or enter legitimate ARexx commands. For example, you could end SAY to check on the contents of a variable. Or switch off the interactive mode by typing:

```
trace ?
```

at the prompt again. You can also enter a number which causes that many commands to be ignored. This is especially useful when dealing with large loops.

The end

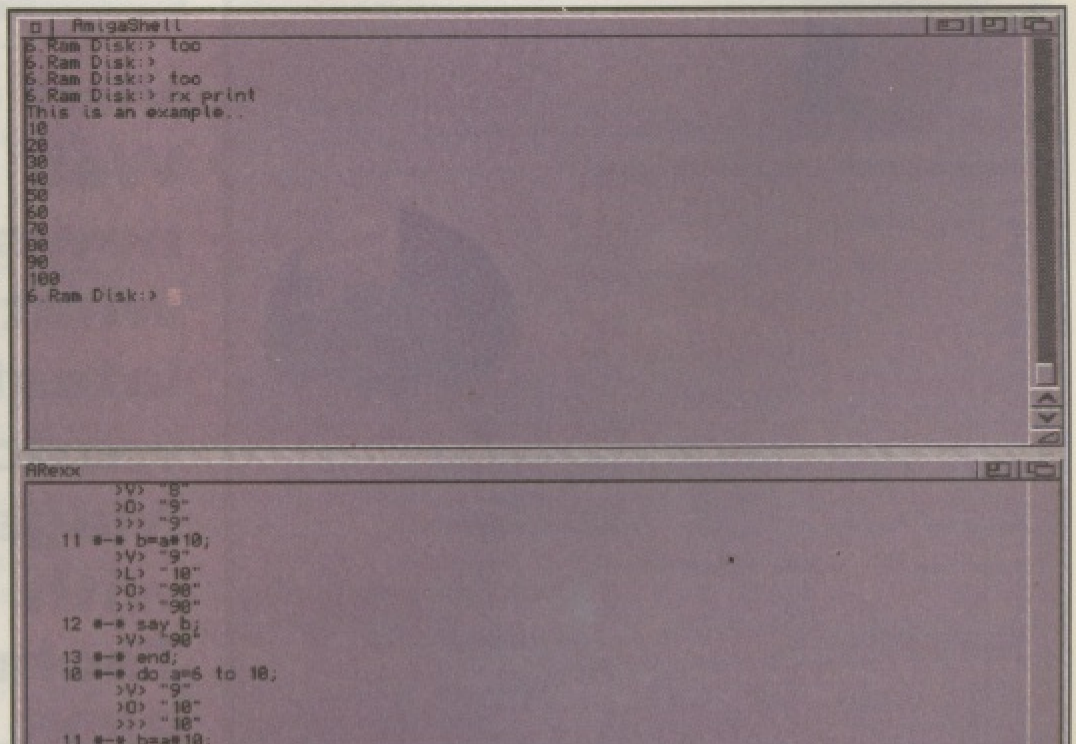
And that's it! If there are any specific Arexx-related questions you wish to ask or if you have any suggestions for future Master Class topics, please get in touch either writing to me at CU Amiga Magazine, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU or via Email. The Email address is johnk@infosys2.the-gap.com and my Web site is http://www.webzone1.co. uk/www/johnk.

John Kennedy

Good news for ARexx fans!

Last month there was excellent news for graphics users with a penchant for ARexx, as it was announced that new versions of both the Photogenics art package and the Imagine rendering software are to include ARexx support.

For Photogenics this means the ability 'batch process' large numbers of files, as well as define custom built commands. Imagine users will have the ability to create new object tools and have an extraordinary degree of control over animations. With some ARexx scripts it would be possible to control the position and shape of Imagine objects mathematically. Let me at it!



▲ By typing in the command TCO you will open a window which will display all the trace output.

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FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

The latest Amiga accessory, the CD-ROM drive goes under the knife for this edition of FAQ. All its mysteries and secrets are revealed.

Q What exactly is a CD-ROM drive?

A A CD-ROM drive is a device which allows a computer to read data stored on a Compact Disk. The CD is placed on a tray (or sometimes in a caddy) and the contents of the disk read by the computer the same as any other disk drive.

The disks themselves may contain nothing but audio information (in which case they are normal 'music' CDs) or both audio and computer data or only computer data (in which case they are CD-ROMS). The drives are made in standard 5.25 inch sizes, which fit into the drive bays of PC cases. For Amiga users, the drives are usually housed in external boxes which include power supplies.

Q How does it work?

A The CD-ROM is a plastic disk, coated with a reflective surface on one side. Data is stored on the disk by making little 'pits' in the surface of the disk which are detected by a low-power infrared laser in the player. Each disk can hold about 800Mb of data, or less if some space is reserved for audio tracks. If the disk is a combined audio/CD-ROM, then track one contains the computer data and subsequent tracks contain the audio information.

Q How can the Amiga deal with Audio CDs?

A Usually the amount of control the Amiga has over an audio CD is limited to playing, pausing and skipping tracks. The audio output is available from the front panel of the CD-ROM drive (most drives have headphone sockets) or at the rear on a miniature connector.

Some CD-ROM drives support a feature called 'CDDA'. This allows the audio data to be transmitted over the data bus and into the Amiga. From here it can be converted into audio data and replayed through the Amiga audio outputs. It's also possible to store the data on disk: effectively working as a high quality sampler.

Q Can you write to a CD-ROM?

A You cannot store data on a standard CD-ROM with a standard CD-ROM drive. They are 'Read Only' which is where the name 'Compact Disk-Read Only Memory' comes from. However, there is software available which gives the impression of writing to the disk by storing the changes on a hard disk. When data is read from the CD, any new material is actually read from the hard disk and not the CD-ROM.

If you want to create your own CD-ROMs, you'll need a special CD-ROM Burner, which costs at least £500 and up and special write-able blank CD-ROMs. You'll also need special software, such as MasterISO from Blittersoft, and an Amiga with a very fast SCSI interface. The art of DIY CD-ROMs is still in its infancy and devices such as the Iomega Jazz can usually do the job better and faster for the small-scale distribution of data.

Q Should I consider getting a CD-ROM drive?

A Definitely. CD-ROMs store an amazing amount of data and if you like shareware or public domain you'll be in seventh heaven. Buy a few Aminet disks for example and you'll have enough gigabytes of software to keep you busy for weeks. Buying software on CD-ROM is also a lot cheaper than downloading it all from BBSes or the Internet. DTP fans will love the amount of fonts and clip art available. Anyone with an interest in graphics will also appreciate the many disks available, packed with images.

Q What types of CD-ROM drives are there?

A There are two main types: SCSI and a form of IDE. Other standards exist from the PC world, where it was common practice to connect the CD-ROM drive to an internal sound card. This leads to several proprietary interface standards. These days SCSI and IDE are the clear leaders. Most PCs have IDE hard drives and the IDE CD-ROM drive simply attaches to the same cable.

Q Which should I use on my Amiga?

A It's up to you. The A600, A1200 and A4000 computers have an IDE hard drive interface built-in and Blittersoft are selling a cable and software package which allows IDE CD-ROM drives to be used. It's also possible to get a device which houses a hard drive and CD-ROM drive in an external tower case, such as the Intrinsic Tower. Alternatively, any Amiga SCSI interface (e.g. Squirrel, Surf Squirrel or one which is part of an accelerator card) can be used with a SCSI CD-ROM drive.

Q How do I connect one to my Amiga?

A That depends on which Amiga you have. if you have an A1200, the easiest way is probably to buy an all-in-one pack which includes a SCSI interface and a CD-ROM drive and power supply already housed in a single box. This will cost about £180. Amiga Technologies demonstrated a drive which connected directly to the PCMCIA port of the A1200 for £240.

Q What speed of drive should I get?

A CD-ROM drives are getting faster and faster – eight speed models (that is, drives which are eight times faster than standard audio CDs) are the latest thing. That said, a double speed one will do fine for 99% of the time, and also save you quite a lot of money into the bargain.

Q Can I use PC CD-ROM titles?

A The Amiga can read the information on the CD-ROMs, but you cannot run the programs. For example, a CD-ROM sold for PCs containing GIF graphics files is perfectly useable by the Amiga. However, a game for the PC released on CD-ROM cannot be used. Yes, you can just about run DOS software with an emulator (PC Task includes CD-ROM driving software) but the emulator runs so slowly you would not be able to play games.

John Kennedy

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Q&A

Donning some flashy leather gear Tony and Mat get ready to whip yet more of your probing and teasing queries into submission. Send your techncial questions to Q&A, CU Amiga Magazine at the usual address.



OK hit us with some really hard ones. I want something that I can really get my teeth into.



I want more, more, MORE. I want more technical questions I tell you, oh please! Yes! That's it, right there.

Total emulation

I recently bought an Amiga from my Escom store and I'm really pleased with it. However, before buying it the salesman tried to convince me to buy a PC instead, at the time he said it could run Amiga software. I know the Amiga can run PC software but was he right about the PC being able to run Amiga stuff? I'd love to take some of my software into work and show them off. I know this isn't a normal Amiga question but I'd appreciate any help you can provide.

Tim Graver Suffolk.

To run PC software on your Amiga you need a PC emulator (such as PC Task). However, there are no Amiga emulators for the PC, mainly because emulating the Amiga's custom chips at a reasonable speed has so far proved impossible. Don't expect to be able to run PC software on your Amiga at anywhere near the speed of a 486 or Pentium PC. Remember also that reading and writing to PC (MS-DOS) disks is a completely different matter to actually running PC software.

Return to sender

Back in October 1995 I got your PageStream 2.2 cover disk and since then I've been trying to produce an Amiga newsletter. I've produced a good newsletter and now want to get it printed but when I sent it to some print shops they returned the disks saying they couldn't read them. Do you know any Amiga print shops or how I can save the files in a compatible format?

Craig Thomas, Manchester

The problem you're probably having is that most print shops are geared up to handle Mac compatible disks and files. However, most of the professional firms will also be able to read PC Postscript files which can be output from your Amiga.

Firstly, under Workbench format a disk in PC format – type 'Format PC0:'. Secondly, in PageStream set the printer driver to Postscript and chose the Print to Disk option. Save this file to the previously formatted disk. When you send it to the company tell them it's a Postscript file on a PC disk and they'll be able to handle it.

DOSsing around

I've had my Amiga for about two years now and I'd like to start doing more advanced things with it. Currently I use it for graphics using DPaint III and VideoStage Pro off your magazine. At work I use a PC and know a few MS-DOS commands, but when I type these into the DOS Shell on the Amiga I get an error message saying "Unknown Command".

Is the DOS Shell on my Amiga the same as DOS on my PC or is it something different? Are there any books that will teach me these DOS commands? I didn't get any with my Amiga.

Paul Edington, Perth.

The DOS Shell on the Amiga is like MS-DOS but it uses different commands, and is also considerable more powerful. A good book for learning AmigaDOS commands is Mastering AmigaDOS Tutorial or Mastering AmigaDOS Reference – both available from Bruce Smith Books (tel: 01923 894 355). Alternatively, you could try an online help tutorial on the subject such as DOS Man from 17-Bit software.

Once you get into AmigaDOS you might want to make some 'aliases' so you can type in MS-DOS commands with the Amiga converting them to their equivalent AmigaDOS versions. To do this type something like 'alias exit endcli'. Where 'endcli' is the AmigaDOS command and 'exit' is the name of the corresponding MS-DOS version. typing 'exit' will then execute the endcli command.

Scanner power

I've been using your excellent ImageFX cover disk, and have come to the conclusion that it's great. However, being quite old (75) I'm not able to hold the mouse very well and so can't paint very good pictures. I seem to remember in a past issue you mentioned something about scanners and how they could be used to get existing pictures into the Amiga. This sounds just perfect for my needs. My question (sorry it's taken so long) is will all scanners advertised in your illustrious magazine work with this program and what frequency of scanner should I use?

Peter Lance, Croydon.

A scanner would certainly allow you

to take existing pictures and get them into your Amiga for use in ImageFX. All scanners advertised come with their own software that will be able to scan pictures and save them in a file format suitable for use in ImageFX.

It's worth noting that this program can talk to some scanners directly, but these tend to be the more expensive kind.

As to frequency, we're not quite sure what you mean by this. Frequency is a term used to describe sound and monitor resolution and isn't used in conjunction with scanners. If you mean what resolution (ie how much detail the scanned pictures will have) this really depends upon what you will be doing with the pictures. If you're just viewing them on screen then between 200 and 300 dpi will be fine. If you want to print them out we suggest something a little higher, perhaps 400 dpi.

A hard time

A friend of mine has just bought a new hard drive for his computer. It's by a company called JTS, who I've never heard of before and it's also amazingly small, less than the height of a matchbox. I want to know if this is a real hard drive, as before I've only seen much bigger hard drives and secondly, if it is real can I plug it into an Amiga?

Damon Smith, London.

Yes Demon, JTS drives are real and they are amazingly small aren't they! Strangely enough, JTS hard drives were originally introduced into this country by Atari, the old arch rival of the original Amiga developer Commodore. They'll work fine on Amigas although you'll need a mounting bracket to keep them secure inside the A1200 or A600. Call Wizard Developments (01322 527800) who supply these and the drives.

Music maestro

I've got an Amiga 1200 which I used to produce demo tracks of my band – the Blue Scorpions. The question I have is about CDs. My drummer Paul says CDs are digital and so I should be able to sample the sound directly off of the CD without having to use a sampler. If he is right how can I do it? I've looked at the CD drive I have (an Overdrive quad speed) but can't see anyway of doing it.

Simon Turner, Islington.

In theory CD drives should be able to transfer the digital audio data from a CD direct to the Amiga without having to use a sampler – simply transferring the digital data between the drive and the Amiga's memory. However, typically the interface between the drive and Amiga is limited in some way, often to keep the price down. However, the SCSI Sony drive and a few others can do this but you'll then need the correct software. HiSoft supply these drives complete with software to transfer digital audio data. Then all you'll need is a sample editor to edit and replay them, although unless you have a 16-bit sound card they can only be played in 8- bit resolution.

Class 1 modem

I've been offered an old modem that supports Class One fax communications for £50. A friend has told me that he couldn't get a Class One fax modem to work on his Amiga and they're rubbish. Will it work with the Amiga and is it worth the money?

David Taylor, Tyne-on-Weir.

You will have a problem getting a Class One modem to work with the Amiga. Not because it's incompatible, but rather because Class One faxes, unlike the more recent Class Two variety, are not well supported by Amiga applications – in particular GP Fax – and so you'll have trouble using it. If you only want to use it for Email and Web surfing then it'll be fine, although we recommend you seriously consider how much you'll end up spending on phone bills as a result of having a slower modem – it could well outweigh the initial saving of the modem price. If however you intend to use it for faxing a lot it's probably better to save your money and get a Class Two model.

CD emulation

I've had my Amiga 1200 for about three years now and I'd like to upgrade but before I do I have a few queries.

1. Is the Magnum 030/40mHz good?

2. Should I get a double or quad speed CD-ROM as I've heard that double speed is too slow for displaying video footage.

3. Does the Squirrel CD32 emulator run most software without too much bother?

4. I've been told that I can use PC and Sega Saturn CDs on an Amiga CD-ROM without the use of any emulators. Is this true?

5. Is PC Task 4.0 any good and would I have to get hold of PC DOS disks and Windows to use CDs?

Andy Kelly, Essex.

1. Yes, it will beef up your A1200 very nicely, especially with a 4Mb or 8Mb RAM SIMM.

2. If there's not much difference in price, then the quad speed drive would be worthwhile. However, a double-speed drive is acceptable for most applications. There are very few Amiga CDs which need fast transfer rates for spooling digital 'video', so this won't be an issue with most CDs.

3. Yes, but due to a few technicalities there are quite a few CD32 games which will not work as normal.

4. You can read PC and Sega Saturn CD-ROMs on an Amiga CD-ROM. Certain sound sample files can be loaded into Amiga software such as OctaMED. However, you can't run Saturn software as there is no Saturn emulator available.

5. PC Task is pretty good but you will need MS-DOS and Windoze software to make full use of it. Be prepared for a substantial speed loss compared to running the software on a PC. ■

Monkey Magic

I think I have come up with a way of running Monkey Island 1 from a hard drive, which many people (including myself) have had trouble doing. It seems as though the game does not like to run after DOS or Workbench has opened a screen (something to do with the Devs/system-configuration file I think) so to run the game you must boot from a floppy disk, and then direct the Amiga to find all necessary files in a hard disk directory as detailed below.

1 Format a floppy disk
2 Install it (type 'Install df0:' in the Shell)
3 Make a directory called 'S' on the disk
4 Using a text editor (ie 'ed filename') type in the following text:
cd {directory} monkey_island Where {directory} is the location of the Monkey Island files on the hard drive Save this to the floppy disk as 'S/startup-sequence'

Now reboot the Amiga and be amazed at how quickly it loads! All the savegame files are saved to the hard drive directory.

To run Monkey Island 2 repeat stages 1 to 3, but then copy the file 'S/startup-sequence' from the Monkey Island 2 Disk 1 to the S directory of the blank disk.

It will read something like:
Stake >nil: 5000 run >nil: <nil Monkey2 >nil: <nill: endcli >nil:
Edit the file, adding the following text between lines one and two:
cd {directory where MI2 files are} Reboot the machine from that floppy disk and Monkey Island 2 will run without problem. This should work for any old game that claims to be hard disk installable but presents a mixed up screen when run through WB or DOS.

Mr. S. Osborne, no address supplied.

Send your Q&A problems to ...

You can send your technical problems [or answers – Ed] to CU Amiga by the following means:
By letter to Q&A, CU Amiga, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU.
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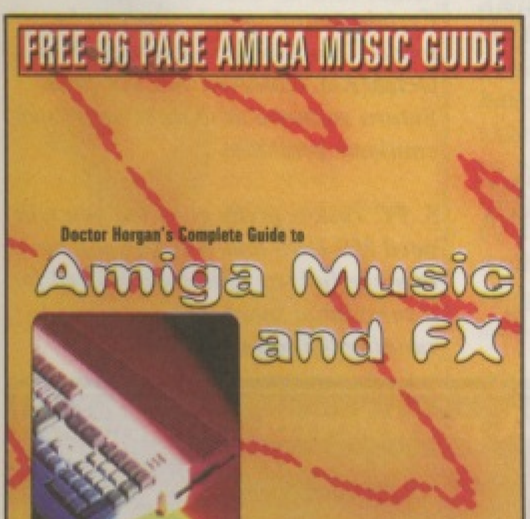
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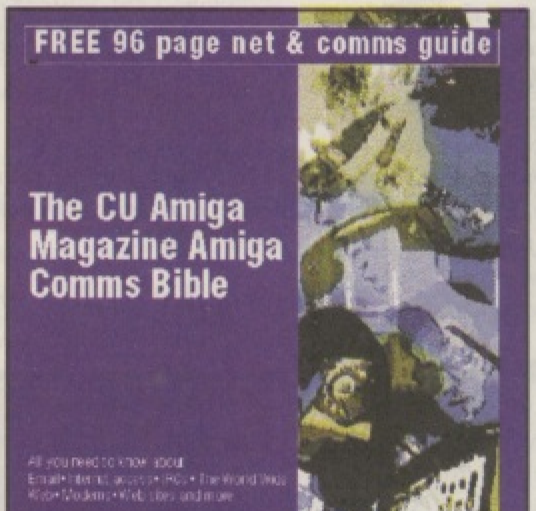
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Points of view

Legal eagles

By Alan Dykes

Whether to cover all their bases legally speaking, or out of genuine interest, VIScorp now seem to have indicated that they will be manufacturing the Amiga as a proper desktop computer.

Of course it is possible that we misinterpreted them right from the start but it didn't seem as though they were very interested in producing a branded Amiga product until other companies piped up with their own plans for doing so. And by establishing an intention to produce an Amiga VIScorp immediately strengthen their position with regard to licence fees. Of course this is their right and if they have purchased Amiga Technologies (again a grey area – lots of announcements but no genuine confirmation), they would be mad not to pursue every stream of revenue available via licencing and jealously protect their copyright. They're paying good money for it after all.

Plan of action

But maybe this is part of the game plan. They haven't said that they have bought Amiga Technologies as yet, and the final price and details may be held up precisely because VIScorp are actually testing the water to see just how much licencing revenue they are likely to get out of the concept, the chipset and the AmigaOS rights. Likewise the amount of interest shown in producing Amiga clones might have woken VIScorp up to the realisation that it is not a market to be neglected. Surely they don't want to get left behind like IBM?

Total domination

VIScorp will be, as owners of Amiga, the centre or the universe as far as it is concerned. But just how big the rest of that universe becomes is also largely down to them. There is nothing we would like better than to see VIScorp, Phase 5, PIOS, Eagle and anyone else who fancies trying their luck with Amiga competing in the marketplace for our cash. Then you'd see decent computers, decent software and continued development. You might even see advertising campaigns to rival PCs.

A word of warning though. If VIScorp price their licences out of this world, or cannot come to joint venture arrangements with the other manufacturers, this Amiga universe will be very small and could collapse. The safest bet has to be plenty of competition – go for monopoly and all the eggs are in one basket again.

One of the biggest plus points of VIScorp has to be their hunger for success, their energy and their accomplished team of research experts. Add to these a good stock flotation (ie wads of cash) and robust PR and marketing and you have a headline-grabbing company. If they provide headline-grabbing products too (and there's no reason why they can't) it would be cool. If they police and regulate the Amiga compatible market, ensuring that it is not prohibitively expensive to obtain a licence and that development is encouraged they will do themselves, you and me a power of good. ■

> **“If VIScorp price their licences out of this world, this Amiga universe will be very small and could collapse.”**

■ **Alan Dykes is CU Amiga Magazine's Editor.**

The truth as I see it

By John kennedy

The Amiga as we know it is dead. Commodore smothered it, and with it the hopes of any easy passage to a next generation machine. Instead we are left with a nice (although single user) Operating System and a video-orientated chipset which is out of date and cannot hold a candle to the latest PC display cards or PlayStation/Saturn consoles.

Yes, of course, a new Amiga with a kick-ass processor and state-of-the-art graphics would be nice: but it's not going to happen. The effort and expense required to build such a machine – and building one from scratch is what we are talking about here – is way too much.

Who would buy something like this anyway? It would be two times as expensive as a Pentium based PC and lack the software to take advantage of the hardware. It's a dead end as a massmarket machine, and although it would find a niche for techheads and video fans, it wouldn't sell in sufficient numbers to be interesting.

To re-cap, what we have now is a nice OS and some Videochips. Which is exactly what VIScorp want of course, for their consumer orientated set-top box. Yes, Commodore tried it with the CDTV, but this time there is the Internet and cable TV companies to help it along. The right sort of deal would see the box being supplied for free to your home, complete with all sorts of home shopping and pay-per-view systems. The Amiga would pay for itself in months. It just might work – and if it does, it will spawn brand new desktop systems.

Why? Because if there is an Amiga (in some shape or form) in a large percentage of homes, there will be a need for software. That means authoring systems and that means proper Amiga computers again. It also means a potential software market bigger than ever before: imagine if you could sell software to owners of video recorders – now you are getting an inkling of the size of the market VIScorp are playing for. So, the Amiga is dead but it also has the best chance of coming back. Better than AT. Better than Commodore even. Trying to sell it as a home computer is doomed to failure, but making it a domestic Internet/SmartTelephone/TV box is the Amiga's last best chance for a piece of the future. ■

> **“So, the Amiga is dead but it also has the best chance of coming back. Better than AT. Better than Commodore ...”**

■ **John Kennedy is an Amiganut, a freelance journalist and an Internet junkie. He also uses a PC, by the way.**

Backchat

Why aren't our CDs monthly? Why don't we use PNG graphics on our Web pages? Why are our tutorials too easy? Want to join the Inquisition? Write in to the usual address.

Music to my ears

Tim Barr wrote the article 'Publish Your Music' in the June 96 issue of CU Amiga Magazine. Which company did he get the quote from for the prices for the 500 white labels? DJ Magazine said that a run of 1,000 seems to be the minimum these days that companies are willing to quote on. Also what is the difference between royalties and profit sharing?

Adrian, Emailand.

Kevin McKay of Musique Tropique uses a company called Capital Tech (tel: 0181 450 3766) to press his records. You could also try Audio Services Limited (tel: 0171 739 9672) who will also be able to help you out with a run of 500 vinyl pressings.

A royalty payment system works on the basis of the artist earning a prearranged amount of money for every copy of the record that is sold. Profit sharing (in a 50-50 deal) is where the artist and the record label split the total profits gained from the sales of a record. This total profit figure would be arrived at by deducting all production, promotion and administrative costs from the total amount of revenue earned from the sales of the record.

Unfortunately there are no hard and fast rules regarding recording contracts. If you are afraid of being ripped off by record companies, the best advice is to take recommendations from other artists and read everything very carefully before signing contracts.

Quality or quantity CDs

I've noticed that other Amiga magazines are now releasing monthly CDs whereas CU Amiga Magazine only releases one in a blue moon. I've got both of your CDs and I have to say they are absolutely superb so why aren't you going to release one monthly like your competitors. If you did I'd buy yours instead as I have been disappointed by the other CDs as they don't seem to have much on them.

Linda Byrne, Middlesex.

You've answered the question for yourself really. You say that you've been disappointed with the contents of the monthly CDs, that's what we at CU Amiga Magazine are trying to avoid. We've chosen to produce top-quality CDs rather than put out a CD that we weren't satisfied with for the sake of a few extra sales. I'm sure you'll agree when you see our next CD that it was well worth the wait.

Loadsa games

I'd like to congratulate you on the amount of games coverage you have in your magazine. You even manage to have more games coverage than other magazines which are dedicated purely to games. Well done.

Joe, New York.

Thanks for your support, we try our best to make sure we bring all the games information we can. Glad you like it. What's the weather like in NYC?

Absolute beginners

I'm completely and utterly fed up with beginners tutorials in Amiga magazines. For over four years, I have had to put up with it. Now, the facts are that:

1) I am not a beginner.

2) Why on earth you should treat nearly every single damn reader as one puzzles me.

3) Four and a bit years ago, I may have been, but, I knew how to insert a disk and what buttons to press etc. and I have had prior computing experience dating back to the age of 7.

Now, I know what you are going to say on this subject and that not every Amiga owner is an expert or just better than average. Not every Amiga owner wants to learn more challenging avenues of computing, instead of playing SWOS or F1GP. I realise this. However, I think it's about time that you lead the way of the remaining Amiga magazines and started to provide some more advanced Amiga users, with new topics of interest in the magazine.

Letter of the month

Starting a trend

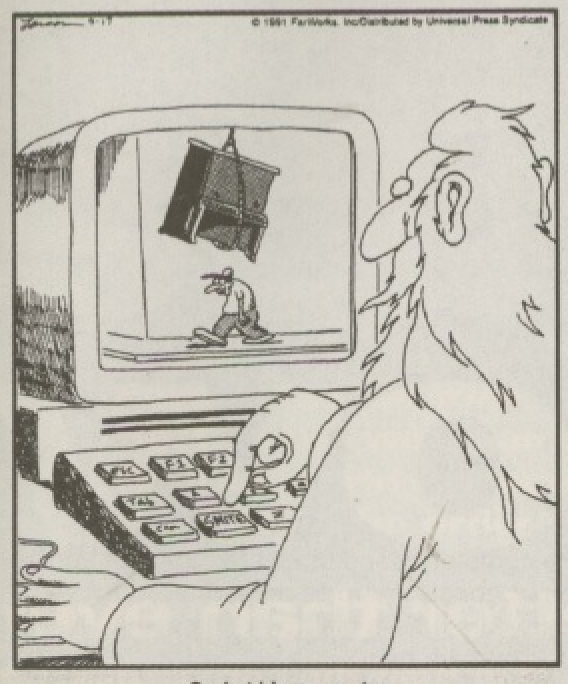


In the issue June '96 the Net God said that although you wanted to use PNG Graphics instead of GIF for your web pages you had to bow to the common denominator, the PC, and use GIFs instead. I don't think this is a good idea. Why should NetScape set the standards? It's about time Amiga users started to set standards that NetScape can copy. I've seen the message 'this page requires NetScape' on lots of pages, so it's about time Amiga users started to fight back. If you use PNG images in your pages you can put 'This page is best viewed using an Amiga' on them. We could even create our own HTML tags to put in web pages. Amiga users should contact the authors of web browsers like AWeb and Voyager so that these HTML tags could be supported.

Stuart Kelly, Email: stuart@dkelly1.demon.co.uk

This is an interesting point, however we're of the belief that standards shouldn't be introduced for standards sake. NetScape, for example, has pioneered some powerful and useful extensions to HTML which are in use by virtually all Amiga browsers. As for PNG, we're still undecided on the topic as many CU readers are accessing our pages from work or university where they are unfortunately forced to use Netscape or the like. For the moment we're using GIF but the jury is still out.

THE FAR SIDE By GARY LARSON



God at his computer

I would very much like to see a discussion with programmers at Bullfrog, Sensible Software and others to provide code fragments/solutions to somewhat more complex coding on the Amiga.

For example, 3D Algorithms, you could invite David Braben or Geoff Crammond to explain how to go about writing your own 3D game. How about the intelligence routines in games like Sensible Soccer and Speedball 2, how some of these routines are coded I would really like to know. I think a few others would too.

Games need not be the only subject of interest. I am sure there are many interesting in 3D Rendering packages, art packages, business applications, sound/music, even hardware. How many would love to be able to build an interface to allow their Amiga to use Gameboy carts? I would. OK it may well take a few tutorials to cover such an in-depth topic, however, I think it would be well worth it and IT WILL make rather interesting reading. This is what I look for in a good magazine. If you are to continue to improve areas of your magazine, then I hope that you would care to consider at least some of what I hope to see.

Robert Wilson,
Manchester Metropolitan University.

Our tutorials can generally be split into two categories. First there are the guides to cover mounted software. In these cases it's necessary to start from the basics and work up to the more complex features over the course of a few parts. If you don't know the basic operating methods of a program then it's useless reading about the more advanced areas.

You'll find that the rest of our tutorials are generally far more advanced than their equivalents in other Amiga magazines, packed with more ideas and facts without all the waffle in between. Take Mat Bettinson's Wired World series for example. Where else could you be talked through the intricacies of setting up a complete working Internet system from the ground up? Not in any other magazine that's for sure! Then there's Tony Horgan's Sound Lab series, full of ideas to help you get professional quality cutting edge music from your Paula chip. If you want to get your hands dirty there's John Kennedy's regular Masterclass section. The list goes on but you can turn to the Workshop section to see for yourself.

We are looking to bring back a full programming tutorial series of some kind and hardware projects are by no means a thing of the past. We can pitch our tutorials at any level from beginners to expert, that's not a problem. We think we've got the balance right. Could others let us know if you think otherwise too.

Men behaving badly

I'm been an Amiga fan for some time now and used to buy all the Amiga magazine but recently due to financial restrictions I had to cut back and buy just but yours and another leading magazine as I have always respected both your opinions and believe that you provide the best coverage and service to Amiga users. I also felt that both your magazines were a lot more serious and adult like in your approach to the Amiga and your readers unlike some of the other kiddy games magazines. However, I was shocked recently when I picked up a copy of one of your rival magazines to see a picture of your technical editor Mat Bettinson in it. I wasn't surprised at the picture but more at the caption which was a direct cheap and childish jibe at his appearance. What is happening? I have noticed that this other magazine has deteriorated in quality recently but I didn't think that things were so bad that they are resorting to this kind of behaviour.

Gonie Govenden, Cumbria.

We don't know the reasons behind this behaviour either and can only guess that an inferiority complex has something to do with. However, I hear that you can get surgery for that kind of thing.

Aussie hell

Being an Amiga owner in Australia is slowly becoming a large burden on the backs of those who own them. Why do I say that? Am I going to say that I'm sick of getting laughed at and I'm going to buy a (spit) Play Station? Nup. Is it because the last time that anyone bothered to advertise the machine was in 1988 and featured John Laws talking in a disgusting monotone? Nup. I'm saying this because although the fact is that Amiga has the power to kick butt from here to the moon, the shops that hold the key to the Amiga's success are locked in by the power of public opinion.

The last time I saw Amiga games in a major department store was when the Kixx collection was released a few years ago (which by the way were dual format: Amiga and PC, spit again).

Everywhere I go it's 'Buy A PC, surf the Net!' 'Buy a PlayStation! Don't bother that it's so expensive and all the games have the playablity of a house brick!' Only one shop in the WHOLE of Queensland could help me with my hardware and software problems. ONE. Is that fair? I don't think so. It's time somebody got their butt over here and DID something about it!

Matthew Lloyd, Brisbane, Australia.

Strong words Matthew, let's hope VIScorp rectify the situation soon.

Still hanging in there

First, I'd like to say how much I appreciate CU Amiga Magazine for setting up CD-ROM II to boot easily on a CD32. Thanks also for your advice on how to get CD-ROM I to boot on my CD32 although I still disagree with your Email reply to me telling me to sell my CD32 and get a CD-ROM, even though it is slow, SERNET is brilliant and I have 100% CD32 game compatibility. Luckily, my local computer store in Doncaster ('The Computer Store') is selling some pretty good CDs for as little as £2.99.

As for the popular belief that the Amiga is dying – no way. I rang Harwoods, this morning, to buy a Blizzard 1230-IV and all of the boards for the next two batches are sold before Harwoods even receive them. Finally, Harwoods say the Blizzard IV needs a single-sided Simm but I thought your review for the board said that two-sided ones could be used? Please clarify.

Andrew Clarke, Royce Hall, Loughborough University of Technology, Leicestershire.

As we recall from the Email conversation, we said that if CD32 compatibility is an issue then you are indeed better off sticking with the SERNetted CD32. However, it is extraordinarily slow as you have no doubt discovered and if you are moving a lot of material off CDs such as our CUCDs, then this will quickly move beyond an annoyance for many. It's a choice every CD32 user will have to make on their own.

Yes it appears that the strong market for A1200 accelerators continues today. As for the Blizzard 1230 IV, we did clarify it the first time round, it accepts double sided Simms. In fact such a Simm is still in use in our own Blizzard 1230-IV.

One true love

Six years I came into contact with the Amiga 500 via a friend and immediately fell in love with it. Today apart from my wife I have a mistress, my Amiga 500, who has an excellent body, perfectly formed in every way and is a great thinker too. I eat, sleep, drink and everything the Amiga, it is a glorious machine which will never be beaten. I know there are many A500 users out there who feel the same way as me.

I am one of the millions of A500 users who is on a very low income therefore I am unable to fork out mass amounts of money for upgrades and add-ons let alone upgrading to an A1200.

Please support all Amigas, A500 upwards and their users will support Amiga, to give it a long future.

Marc Chapman, Sunderland.

We're glad to hear that you like the Amiga so much but how does your wife feel about this?

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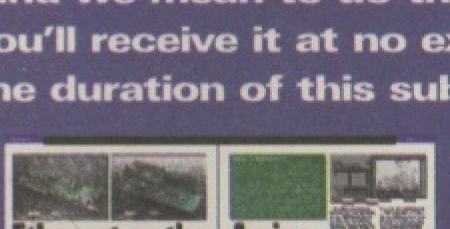
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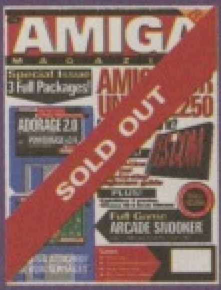
Don't look back in anger. Look back in anticipation of what great stuff you can still get your hands on.

June 1995



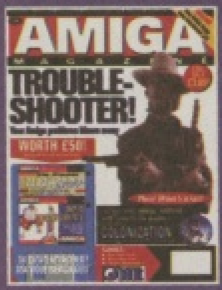
ON THE DISKS: Image FX 1.5 (all Amigas with 2Mb), USM demo. **FEATURE:** Image processing explained using free cover disk. **INSIDE:** RAM speed test: Blizzard 1230 III, Siren Apollo, Octamed 6 reviewed, Primal Rage, Sensible Golf previewed.

July 1995



ON THE DISKS: Adorage 2.0, Power-base v3.4, Arcade Snooker-full game. **Feature:** Step by step guide to the Net. **INSIDE:** First report on Escom, LightWave 4 previewed, Cinema 4D, Scala MM400, Virocop and TM2 reviewed.

August 1995



On the disks: Clarissa 2.0 and demo of Cammy Vs Honda in SSF II. **Feature:** Trouble shooting on your Amiga **INSIDE:** DPaint 5 review, the new A400/060 with CyberVision graphics, Games: Colonization, Sensible Golf, Time Keepers, PM2.

September 1995



On the disks: OctaMED 5.04, Speris Legacy, Time Keepers. **Feature:** Sex and computers: an indepth look at what there is and what people think about it. **INSIDE:** Alien Breed 3D, Gloom, SSFII, Brutal, ViroCop A500, Base Jumpers CD32.

October 1995



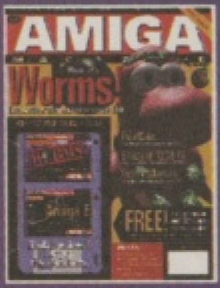
On the disks: Pagestream 2.2, Fears and Citadel demo. **FeatureS:** Using your PageStream cover disk for DTP, Storage: HDs floppies and CD-ROMs. **INSIDE:** Odyssey, Real 3D v3, PageStream 3.0i and a multimedia station reviewed.

November 1995



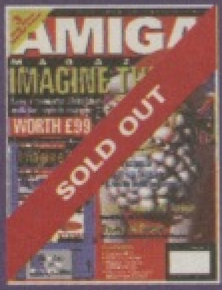
On the disks: AudioMaster IV full program, Virtual Karting demo, CD-ROM edition-Aminet 7 and more. **FeatureS:** CD-ROM definitive guide to drives and disks. **INSIDE:** Cinema 4D, Mac™ Emulation, Final Writer 4, Pinball Mania.

December 1995



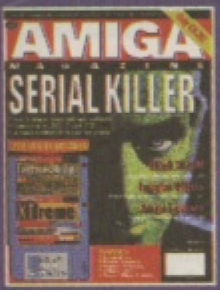
On the disks: Worms demo, Amiga E full program plus free Amiga E manual **FeatureS:** Programming, Amiga music. **INSIDE:** Leading Lap, Worms, Flight of the Amazon Queen, Coala, FinalCalc and Amiga M1438S Monitor.

January 1996



On the disks: Imagine 3.0 full program, Zeewolf 2 & Algomusic **FeatureS:** 3D rendering using our cover disk. **INSIDE:** MiconiK Tower, World Construction Set, Amilink, Zeewolf 2, SWOS 95/96, Super Tennis Champions and much more.

February 1996



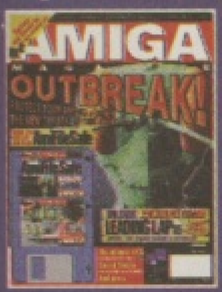
On the disks: TextureStudio plus Imagine objects, DVerb, Mandel 92, Bluff Titler, Amiga E source code, Xtreme Racing. **FeatureS:** Serial linking, portable Amiga prototypes and the first Net Wedding. **INSIDE:** DiskMagic, HiSoft CD-ROM, Virtual i glasses.

March 1996



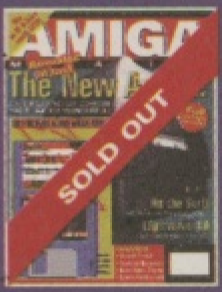
On the disks: VideoStage Pro, Imgauge & XFD, Gloom Deluxe and 10 Worms levels. **Features:** VideoStage and The future of Games. **INSIDE:** 060 for A1200, Wordworth 5, Blitz Basic, Super Street Fighter II Turbo, Super Skidmarks data disk.

April 1996



On the disks: AmiFileSafe, Leading Lap SE – 5 level full game. CD-ROM edition available. **Features:** Virus Protection and Wallace & Gromit in the right computer. **INSIDE:** SX 32, HiQ Station, The Chaos engine previewed, Zeewolf 2 tips, and more...

May 1996



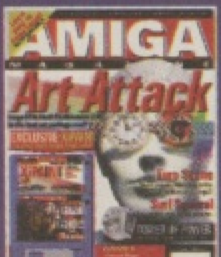
On the disks: Soundtracker Pro II, MIDI Sequencer demo, Alien Breed 3D2 demo. **Features:** Free Amiga music book, the new Walker, Amiga Surfer pack, and the quest for Amigas. **INSIDE:** LightWave 4, Slamtilt Pinball, Tracksuit Manager 2 reviewed.

June 1996



On the disks: Termite demo, Killing Grounds demo. Plus free 96 page net and comms guide. **Features:** Escom sells Amiga Technologies, publish your music. **INSIDE:** Modem round-up, Total Football and new TimeKeepers disk reviewed.

July 1996



On the disks: XiPaint (full program) and Primal Rage demo. **Features:** Special report on what's happening in Europe and the latest on Visorp and PIOS. **INSIDE:** Image FX 2.6, Surf Squirrel, A4000 Tower, Primal Rage, SWOS Euro and more reviewed.

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